



PART II: YEAR 2 ALLIANCE DISTRICT PLAN AMENDMENT

1. District Contact Information

Instructions: Using the space provided below, please identify a main point of contact for the year two Alliance District plan amendment and provide that individual's contact information.

Name of School District:	HAMDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS		
Name of Grant Contact Person:	FRANCES M. RABINOWITZ		
Phone # of Contact Person:	203-407-2090		
Email of Contact Person:	frabinowitz@hamden.org		
Address of Contact Person:	Street Address:	60 PUTNAM AVENUE	
	City:	HAMDEN	Zip Code: 06517
Name of Superintendent:	FRANCES M. RABINOWITZ		
Signature of Superintendent:		Date:	
Name of Board Chair:	JOHN KEEGAN		
Signature of Board Chair:		Date:	
Local Board Approval of Plan: ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		
Date of Plan Presentation to the Local Board:	August 19, 2013		
Priority School District?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		

¹ Due to the iterative process by which Alliance District plans will be submitted, reviewed, and re-submitted, seeking local board of education approval may be most appropriate toward the conclusion of the application process. Districts must obtain board approval, but should submit completed plans regardless of whether approval has been obtained.

2. District Vision, Mission & Values

Instructions: Please provide the district's vision and mission statements below. Insert the district's core values or guiding beliefs that are to be embodied by all staff, students, and members of the district community. This can come directly from your district strategic plan or district Improvement Plan.

What is the district's **vision statement**?

Hamden Public Schools' goal is to eliminate the racial and socioeconomic disparities in achievement across all domains while significantly improving all students' performance.

We envision a professional learning culture wherein all members of the school community consistently put the needs of students first and foremost. In such a community, the exclusive focus of all our efforts will be to increase the achievement levels of all students, while simultaneously expanding the knowledge bases of all adult members of the school community.

What is the district's **mission statement**?

Our mission is to ensure all our students learn to the best of their potential each and every day they are entrusted to our care.

What are the district's core **beliefs or values**?

We believe:

- * All students can achieve high standards when given high-quality instruction, a viable curriculum and a comprehensive system of support.
- * All students are motivated to attend school and learn best when in a safe, positive and engaging environment that encourages communication, collaboration and reflection.
- * All students will thrive in and be prepared for an ever-changing world when students, families, teachers and the community form respectful relationships and strong, active partnerships.

Describe the district's overarching strategy and/or **theory of change** to dramatically improve student achievement district-wide. The theory of change should describe a core set of inputs or strategies leading to several desired outcomes. What major changes or shifts will result in improved student outcomes district-wide?

We have identified four theories of change and related inputs and strategies to dramatically improve student achievement district-wide:

1. If we ensure that the data team process focuses on the impact of adult actions then teaching will improve and student learning will increase. HPS has done extensive work over the past few years to establish data-driven decision making (DDDM) in the district. HPS has provided professional development for administrators and instructional staff in the concept and rationale for implementing

data-driven decision making. We have established vertical and instructional data teams at every school as well as a district data team that monitors school data teams and assists them to grow and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use. We were supported in our DDDM efforts as participants in the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI). Over the past year, with support from Alliance funding, we provided a data facilitator to support every school in the continued process of developing the capacity and expertise of the data teams so that they will eventually be able to operate independently. We have also used the expanded support of having full-time literacy and math specialists at every school to provide data teams with "knowledgeable others" who can help teachers identify and implement effective teaching strategies that address the needs identified by the data teams. As the data teams have matured in their ability to analyze and act upon the data, they have increasingly focused on how to tailor adult actions in the classroom to address student needs most directly and effectively.

2. If we guarantee that a rigorous curriculum is provided to all students through effective strategies then teaching will improve and student learning will increase. The rigor of a curriculum and the use of high quality teaching strategies have been identified as among the most important factors in improving student learning. HPS has undertaken a multi-year effort to revamp its K-12 curricula across the board using the Understanding by Design (UBD) approach to create more rigorous curricula that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Each new curriculum is subjected to a well-defined development, piloting, approval, and implementation process. We have been able to move more efficiently and effectively through the curriculum development process with the support of Alliance funding to bring on a full complement of full-time literacy and math specialists. The specialists help to develop curriculum, provide embedded professional development to teachers and staff in the curriculum implementation and its relationship to the CCSS, and observe implementation on site in every school to ensure fidelity. The hiring of a dedicated Language Arts department chair, which the district did not have for the past several years, has also helped to expedite the curriculum development process and ensure a strong focus on important literacy skills across content areas. The curriculum redesign process has been complemented by a district-wide professional development effort focused improving teacher effectiveness across all content areas and grade levels using Robert Marzano's nine instructional strategies that are most likely to improve student achievement. Regular, informal walk-throughs ("instructional rounds") are used by administrators to monitor the use of these strategies and provide frequent, informal feedback to teachers on how to improve their instruction. This has helped create a culture of openness and comfort with observations that will facilitate our transition to the new teacher evaluation model in 2013-14.

3. If the belief that "All Means All" is non-negotiable, then effective teaching interventions and supports will be systematically implemented at the individual, class, school and district level and student learning will increase. To achieve this, we developed a district-wide SRBI implementation guide to address implementation gaps in how interventions were delivered from school to school and have established a dedicated block in the schedule for tier II and tier III interventions to occur at every school. To enhance school climate and promote a positive learning environment, we have instituted an evidence-based, district-wide social and emotional literacy program known as the RULER approach, which was developed by researchers at Yale University. Hamden High School has just completed the third year of a freshman transition program (the "Freshman Program") that provides a more student-centered, personalized experience to support students through the transition to high school. We have seen a notable decrease in the number of freshmen retained in ninth grade since this program began.

For the 2012-13 school year, the district hired a full-time literacy specialist to support freshmen who struggle with literacy skills by providing professional development to improve how teachers work with these students and to design appropriate instruction and interventions for the students. With Alliance funds, we hired literacy tutors to work individually with freshmen under the supervision and guidance of the literacy specialist. At our Tier 1 elementary schools (Church Street, Helen Street and Ridge Hill), we introduced an after-school program for K-3 students focused on improving their literacy skills; this will be complemented by a summer enrichment program to help students retain their learning during the summer months.

4. If we create a systematic approach to parent and community engagement, all parents will be informed and empowered to actively engage in their children's education. We have sharpened our focus on parent and community engagement over the past couple of years based on the work we have done through our District Improvement Plan, which demonstrated the need for a more deliberate, intentional, district-wide approach that supports and reinforces the work done at each individual school. Last year, we were able to expand our ability to reach out to and support parents with community-based resources, particularly of the birth to five-year-old population, through the addition of a second Family Resource Center in Hamden, which is now located at one of our Tier 1 elementary schools. We have partnered with Hamden's Partnership for Young Children to improve the clarity and availability of information about kindergarten readiness for families as their children approach school age. Our Tier 1 elementary schools will operate summer kindergarten readiness programs for incoming kindergartners, especially those without prior preschool experience.

In 2013-14, we will expand our outreach and support for parents of birth to 5 children by working in partnership with the local public library to renovate its outdated and insufficient space for children and families. The district's subcommittee on parent engagement will undertake planning of a free Parent University that will be offered in the fall of 2014 to all parents of HPS students.

Taken as a whole, we believe these theories of changes and their related strategies create an environment in which student learning is the consistent and clear focus of our efforts. The combination of using data to inform instructional practices, establishing high expectations for students through a rigorous curriculum, emphasizing the use of effective teaching strategies, and ensuring that there is a well-defined system of supports in place to address the needs of each student creates a system in which students can succeed. Over time, the constant dedication of our efforts to strategies that have been shown to have a positive impact on student learning will improve the performance of students in HPS.



3. District Data Profile

Instructions: Complete the district data profile below by providing student and staff information for the current school year (2012-13), and aggregate performance data from the past four school years (2009-10 to present).

District Overview (2012-13):					
Total Enrollment:	5,791	Per Pupil Allocation: ²	\$15,200		
Total # Schools:	11	Operating Budget:	\$80,300,000		
# Review Schools: ³	0	# Turnaround Schools:	0		
Student Demographics (2012-13):					
% White:	42%	% F/R Lunch:	40%		
% Black:	30%	% IEP:	12%		
% Hispanic:	17%	% ELL:	4%		
% Other:	11%	Attendance Rate:	Not available (N/A)		
District Personnel (2012-13):					
# Certified School-Based Staff:	553	Median Teacher Salary: ⁴	\$57,722		
Student/Teacher Ratio: ⁵	10.5/1	# Central Office Administrators:	13		
# School Administrators:	17	# Central Office Support Staff:	19		
Student Achievement:	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	
District Performance Index:			74.8	N/A	
Math	Gr. 3 at/above Goal:	59.9%	58.3%	61.7%	N/A
	Gr. 5 at/above Goal:	66.4%	65.9%	64.3%	N/A
	Gr. 8 at/above Goal:	60.8%	55.4%	54.5%	N/A
	Gr. 10 at/above Goal:	35.4%	35.8%	38.3%	N/A
Reading	Gr. 3 at/above Goal:	50.0%	52.9%	51.5%	N/A
	Gr. 5 at/above Goal:	56.5%	54.5%	61.8%	N/A
	Gr. 8 at/above Goal:	71.8%	67.1%	66.7%	N/A
	Gr. 10 at/above Goal:	29.5%	29.5%	34.1%	N/A
Chronic Absenteeism Rate: ⁶	9.7%	16.7%	14.6%	N/A	
Graduation Rate:	86.2%	83.3%	N/A	N/A	

² Per pupil allocation should include all sources of funds (including local operating, state, federal, and private funds).

³ Review category includes "Review" and "Focus" schools.

⁴ Median salary should reflect the median for all certified staff.

⁵ Ratio should include all certified staff.

⁶ Chronic absenteeism is defined as the percentage of students missing 10 percent or more of school days.



% Pursuing Higher Education:	77.8%	81.7%	77.2%	N/A
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4. District Needs Analysis

Instructions: Using the spaces provided below, identify the district’s greatest strengths and areas of need using findings from the CSDE planning site visit and other relevant district information and data. Be sure to include a root cause analysis identifying the factors contributing to current performance levels. Although you are encouraged to consider strengths and growth areas across all four district domains, you may choose to prioritize and are not required to cite strengths and growth areas in each of the four areas.

For the following domains, identify the district’s greatest **strengths**.

Academics	<p>Our greatest strengths in the area of Academics are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have a robust curriculum development, approval, and implementation process in place. The district is developing K-12 curricula across all subject areas using the Understanding by Design method. 2. All curriculum units are developed collaboratively by Hamden staff and aligned to the Common Core State Standards. 3. Hamden utilizes a multi-tiered system to document and monitor instructional practices, which results in multiple measures of efficacy. <p>Our success in this area results from the consistency in our approach over time. Increased rigor has been a central component of our District Improvement Plan for more than three years. Rather than branch off in new directions, we used the opportunity of Alliance funding to deepen our work in this area by adding specialized personnel (math specialists and a Language Arts department chair) who could expedite the development of curriculum and provide embedded professional development for teachers to support successful implementation. From the outset, we integrated the CCSS into our efforts, not treating the CCSS as a separate mandate to be addressed in addition to our other work. Our data teams are becoming professional learning communities where data is not only analyzed but, with support from our specialists and data facilitators, the results are translated into effective teaching practices and instructional interventions.</p>
Human Capital	<p>Our strengths in the area of Human Capital are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong college partnerships for internships and hiring. 2. High level of autonomy for school-based staff and parents to recommend candidates for hire. 3. Well-developed and highly structured supports in place for non-tenured teachers including TEAM program, 10 hours of additional professional development, and focused support. <p>These strengths were noted in the feedback from our Alliance District planning visit with CSDE staff in April. We will continue these effective practices, but they are not a focus of our efforts through Alliance funding.</p>

Operations	<p>In the area of Operations, our strengths are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The sharing of best practices across all schools to identify where we need additional focus and intervention to implement SRBI consistently and with fidelity. 2. With the enhanced commitment to and focus on implementing SRBI with fidelity at all levels, an additional intervention block was added to the schedule. <p>Prior to implementing the intervention block, the district had identified gaps in SRBI implementation from school to school. In response, we developed a written implementation guide to help establish consistency and fidelity. This led to the creation of a standard intervention block for tier II and tier III interventions in all schools to further ensure the SRBI was being implemented effectively. We also continue to share best practices across schools.</p> <p>Moving forward in this area, we propose to take our efforts further in our three lowest-performing elementary schools by expanding the data facilitator position to a full-time position in each school that encompasses both data facilitation and SRBI coordination. In these three schools, the proportion of students receiving tier II and III interventions is significant. To implement SRBI effectively, we see the need for a dedicated staff member in these schools responsible for coordination of tier II and III interventions. This position is discussed in more detail in Section 6.</p>
Culture and Climate	<p>In the area of Culture and Climate, our strengths include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong district-wide commitment to promoting positive school climate and incorporating social emotional literacy into the curriculum and school culture. 2. The investment of resources and professional development into Marc Brackett's proactive RULER program to support social emotional development and address anti-bullying requirements. 3. The analysis of school climate survey results to identify and implement changes as necessary at specific schools. <p>These strengths were noted in the feedback from our Alliance District planning visit with CSDE staff in April. We will continue these effective practices, but they are not a focus of our efforts through Alliance funding.</p>

For the following domains, identify the district’s most significant **growth areas**.

Academics	<p>Our most significant growth areas in Academics are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The need for further development of district assessment systems. 2. The continued enhancement and development of systems of support for special populations. 3. Equitable technology and technology training are necessary for all schools and students prior to implementation of the Smarter Balanced Assessment. <p>HPS will be a pilot district for the Smarter Balanced Assessments in the coming school year. This presents the district with the immediate challenge of insufficient technology to utilize the new assessments across the district. We have had limited resources to invest in new technology or to maintain existing technology over the past few years of declining budgets. Additionally, we anticipate a high level of need for additional training, technical assistance, and individualized support to assist schools in the implementation of the Smarter Balanced Assessments and to ensure that students are prepared to handle the technology used to administer it. Through our Alliance plan, we propose to hire a full-time administrator, the Director of Assessment and Intervention, who will be responsible for the oversight, coordination, and training needed to pilot the new assessment system district-wide.</p> <p>Technology presents great opportunities for our schools to differentiate instruction to serve the needs of students, particularly those who need remediation and specialized interventions, and to support the more rigorous, 21st century skills of the CCSS. However, our schools have differing levels and types of technology, which has been purchased piecemeal as resources and necessity allow. As a result, it has been a challenge to develop consistent uses of technology across the district to support differentiated and targeted instruction at all levels or to integrate it comprehensively in our curriculum. Through a combination of Alliance funding and district resources, we propose to invest \$1 million in the hardware, infrastructure and other technology upgrades district-wide to address these challenges. Our technology plans are described in more detail in Section 6.</p>
Human Capital	<p>In the area of Human Capital, we have identified the following growth areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruitment of minority staff has been a challenge despite ongoing efforts to attract these candidates. 2. Recruitment of well-qualified staff in specific content areas has been a challenge as well (e.g., Chinese, physics). 3. Because of the autonomy given to school leaders in staff interview and selection process, the District does not have a centralized mechanism for giving staffing priority to the schools with the greatest level of need. <p>We will continue to explore new ways to improve our performance in these areas; however, these activities are not a focus of our Alliance plan.</p>

Operationally, our areas for growth include:

1. Finance and budgeting are major concerns in the district.
2. Additional support is needed to advance technology, particularly for operations and finance.

The first growth area simply acknowledges the constraints the district has faced as LEA funding has increased at 1.5% or less annually for the past five years. Our superintendent and Board of Education members continue to work with Town officials to advocate for education resources.

With regard to #2, the district has had lagging and inconsistent funding to sustain a systematic technology plan that provides for the regular replacement of aging or broken technology infrastructure and equipment or the investment in new technologies that would support advanced assessment strategies, differentiated instruction, and 21st century skills for our students. With a combination of Alliance funding and district resources, we propose to invest \$1M in basic technology infrastructure needs as well as new technology investments that are critical for the district to effectively pursue the priorities outlined in our Alliance plan.

In the area of Culture and Climate, we have identified the following areas for growth:

1. Additional supports are needed to enhance behavior and attendance at the high school level.
2. Although PTAs are in place, the District would like to improve and enhance parent and community engagement in the schools.

At the high school, our efforts have focused on the ninth grade. The Freshman Program provides the environment of a small, intimate high school within a larger building. Using a team structure, we provide more individualized supports to ninth graders, including a math lab, writing lab, freshman study hall, literacy specialist, and a mentoring program. Initiating the Freshman Program has proven successful in improving the freshman promotion rate.

With Alliance funding, we have been able to expand the supports for freshman to incorporate missing elements, such as a Freshman Support Center, which provides a more positive, constructive alternative to in-school suspension. We have added a literacy program supported by a full-time literacy specialist and tutors for students who struggle with literacy skills they need to keep up with high school-level work. As we move forward, we will continue these efforts with freshmen and expand some services to serve upper grades, including an additional reading tutor for special education students and sophomores. We will also support the Connections program, a mentoring and guidance program to help students reach their full potential academically, socially and emotionally by providing them with non-judgmental support and a fostering positive relationships between students and adults at the high school throughout their four years there.

To improve and enhance parent engagement in the schools, the district is developing a more systematic approach to better inform and empower parents to actively engage in their children's education. We are also working to expand community involvement in our schools and better align community-based resources with school supports. The Parent Engagement subcommittee of the District Improvement Plan has developed goals for improved parent communications and resources. This subcommittee is collaborating with the PTAs to organize Hamden's first district-wide Parent University to be held in Fall 2014. The district is also partnering with our local public library to renovate and reorganize the children's section of the library into a true early learning center focused on engaging young children and their families in a wide range of early literacy activities. This will help update the library's materials, create a more welcoming space, and encourage families to use the library as a resource for engaging in their children's learning.

5. District Strategy and Year 1 Reflection

Instructions: Summarize the district's overarching strategy and key initiatives from year one of the Alliance District program. Describe successes and progress made in year one. Provide specific data points to support the analysis.

Articulate the **district's key initiatives from year one** of the Alliance District program.

HPS has used the additional resources available to it as an Alliance District to build upon, expand, and deepen our efforts in the three key initiatives that have been the basis of our District Improvement Plan since 2010:

1. Implement Data-Driven Decision Making
2. Increase Rigor
3. Establish a System of Supports for All Students

Data-driven decision making, increased rigor, and student support systems are all evidence-based strategies that have been shown to be connected to improved student achievement. By retaining a strong, consistent focus in these areas, we believe we will have the greatest impact on student learning.

Briefly describe the district's year one Alliance District **accomplishments** citing specific data, where appropriate.

Priority 1: Data-driven decision making (DDDM):

In our Alliance District plan for 2012-13, we focused on strategies to build the capacity of data teams at each school and assist data teams in applying their data analyses to develop effective, appropriate instructional practices. We were able to make significant progress in this area by hiring a full-time data facilitator (rather than two part-time facilitators as originally planned) who worked alongside a part-time data facilitator supported by LEA funds. With 1.5 FTE serving as data facilitators, the district was able to provide support to the data teams at every school. One significant outcome of the data facilitators' efforts this year was to help data teams focus their attention on how to change adult actions in response to the data analysis. Data teams have also turned our School Improvement Plans into living documents by serving as a mechanism to regularly revisit and update them throughout the year. Revisions and updates are made on a daily or weekly basis using shared drives for the data teams work so that all members can access the SIPs as needed.

Additionally, one of the data facilitators assisted the district data team in assessing the progress of the vertical and instructional data teams at each school. The results of a survey of all data teams demonstrate progress in data team functioning and helped the district identify areas for continued work in the year ahead. Here are some of the results of that survey:

- 75% of teams report a comprehensive analysis of the performance of students in the school at least annually.
- 75% of teams report identification of the most significant student performance issue based on data analysis.
- 75% of teams report that the team determines the most significant adult practice issue contributing to the student performance issue.

- 63% of teams report that adult practice issues are not being expressed as SMART goals.
- School Improvement Plans are reviewed, revisited and revised by 100% of teams.

We also hired five additional full-time math specialists, in addition to four already employed by the district. This gave each of our elementary schools and the middle school a full-time team of one math and one literacy specialist. They are invaluable members of the instructional data teams, where they serve as "knowledgeable others" who can help teachers identify appropriate instructional strategies to respond to the results of the data team analyses. They also provide embedded professional development as needed to deepen teacher's understanding of effective strategies and CCSS.

Priority 2: Increase Rigor

In this priority area, we focused on using the math and literacy specialists and the newly hired Language Arts Department Chair to expedite and improve our curriculum redesign process. The district is revamping its entire K-12 curriculum using the Understanding by Design approach and is ensuring that the new curriculum aligns with the CCSS. The department chairs and specialists provide embedded professional development to teachers regarding the CCSS and the UBD method prior to working with them to redesign the curriculum units accordingly. With a full complement of full-time math and literacy specialists on staff at each school, they are able to provide on-site oversight of curriculum implementation to ensure consistency and fidelity. They also help to identify and share best practices across the schools, which has become more helpful to teachers as the uniformity of curricula across the district continues to increase. We estimate we are approximately 80% complete with our curriculum redesign process.

The curriculum redesign effort is also integrated with Hamden's version of the State's SEED model for teacher evaluation. A committee of administrators, teachers, and union representatives met throughout the 2012-13 school year to develop and plan for the implementation of Hamden's teacher evaluation plan. In developing their non-standardized student learning objectives, teachers will draw upon performance tasks embedded in the new district-approved units to monitor student progress. Thus, the CCSS that are incorporated into the curricula are also reflected in the student learning goals established by the teachers each year.

The district also continued to provide professional development focused on Marzano's effective teaching strategies. High-quality instruction is essential to effective curriculum implementation. Building teacher's understanding of these techniques and their facility in using them will help in the implementation of new curricula and the CCSS in 2013-14. The effective teaching strategies provide a common foundation for teachers to rely upon as they tackle the new content requirements of the CCSS.

Priority 3: System of Supports

The after-school literacy program at our three Tier 1 elementary schools was implemented using IReady software to provide assessment and instruction for students. Notable gains in the number of students who were on grade-level from pre- to post-test were achieved at all three schools, with particularly strong gains at the lower grade levels.

	% of Students on Grade Level in After School Program Pre/Post/Change			
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Church Street	14% / 71% / +57	0% / 63% / +63	25% / 58% / +33	25% / 38% / +13
Helen Street	63% / 88% / +25	33% / 78% / +45	40% / 70% / +30	20% / 20% / 0
Ridge Hill	13% / 88% / +75	18% / 45% / +27	20% / 0% / N/A*	18% / 30% / +12

*Two of five students dropped out of the program, but the remaining students displayed gains in all areas.

HPS works in collaboration with Hamden's Partnership for Young Children (HPYC) to deliver kindergarten transition services to the community. HPYC is a collaborative of early care and education providers, including private and nonprofit daycare centers and home-based care providers. This year, HPYC received Alliance funds to improve and support the registration process by redesigning registration forms, creating welcome materials for parents, publicizing registration dates around the community, and disseminating registration information to their constituents. They also provided two multi-session kinder-prep programs to the community that engage the entire family. Over a seven-week series, parents participate in workshops that familiarize them with kindergarten expectations and teach them ways to develop their children's literacy and math skills at home. At the same time, the preschool-aged child participates in a related activity. Dinner is provided; child care is available for siblings; and each family takes home a free book or early literacy game to use at home.

At the high school level, we focused on two interventions to expand the system of supports for students—the Freshman Support Center and the addition of literacy tutors and a literacy specialist. The Freshman Support Center was staffed daily beginning in February 2013 to provide a more structured, supported, and positive alternative to in-school suspension where students could address, under the guidance of a staff member, some of the factors that may be causing disciplinary issues such as help with time management, organization and study skills; individualized instruction; and time to make up work due to out-of-school suspension or excessive absences. Fifty-one ninth graders used the Center between February and May. Initially, the Center was only be used by the most at-risk students. At that time, a survey of their teachers indicated:

- Teachers found a decrease in the amount of class work owed
- Teachers value the immediate availability of the program
- 30% of these students improved their work completion
- Students' journal entries reflect a positive response to the availability of extra help in their classes

We believe these results are an early indication of the value the Center can provide in helping students develop more positive connections to school and receive support they need to remain on track toward graduation.

The high school also launched a literacy program to support freshman with basic or below basic literacy

skills (approximately 20% of incoming ninth graders in 2012). The program served approximately 100 students on a consistent basis. These students are particularly at risk of falling behind in their classes and not being promoted to sophomores, which is an early indication that they may fail to graduate. The district hired a full-time literacy specialist at the high school to oversee the program. With Alliance funds, we hired three literacy tutors to work individually or in small groups with the freshman to advance their literacy skills. Most students demonstrated substantial progress in the program (see table below). Some adjustments are being made to how students are scheduled in the literacy program in order to resolve attendance issues and to provide credit for participation, which we expect will increase the program's impact next year. We will also add a fourth tutor to work with sophomores and special education students.

High School Literacy Program Outcomes 2012-13

Area of Focus	Comprehension (Fall/Spring)	Word Recognition (Fall/Spring)	Text Dependent Questions (Fall/Spring)	Interdisciplinary Writing (Spring only)
Assessment	Basic Reading Inventory	Basic Reading Inventory	Teacher Created formative assessments using 4 pt SBAC rubric	Released CAPT prompts using CAPT rubric
Progress Expectation	One grade level in school year	One grade level in school year	One level higher from pre- to post-test	One level higher from pre- to post-test
% Meeting or Exceeding Expectation	70% / 83%	55% / 59%	58% / 49%	94%

Several additional activities in our Alliance plan for 2012-13 will be conducted this summer so we do not yet have accomplishment data for these activities, which include: a summer enrichment program at each of the Tier 1 elementary schools, a kindergarten readiness program at each of the Tier 1 elementary schools, and the RAISES Summer Institute at Hamden High School to support under-represented students taking higher level and AP classes.

Explain any key initiatives that the district will **stop or discontinue** and why. Note that districts must consider discontinuing less effective strategies before adding new initiatives.

HPS will continue to focus on these three key initiatives but did not implement a few of the activities originally planned for 2012-13.

We had proposed to hire a Family Outreach Coordinator who would have been responsible for improving the home-school connection for at-risk families through home visits, connecting families to services in the community, and providing personalized attention to encourage school involvement. Through the hiring process we conducted this year, we determined that the district needs to re-examine current policies and practices in this area and develop a more strategic, systematic approach to parent and community engagement district-wide. We have added Parent and Community Engagement as a fourth priority in our District Improvement Plan to examine how the we should move forward in this area. We have also included it as a priority in our Alliance Plan for 2013-14.

We will not continue to provide executive coaches for Tier 1 principals in 2013-14. Two Tier 1



principals who could benefit from this support have already utilized it. With the upcoming implementation of the new teacher evaluation requirements, our focus has been on providing all administrators with the necessary professional development to prepare them to implement the teacher evaluation plan in 2013-14. This professional development includes training in skills such as effective observation techniques and conducting effective feedback sessions that will continue to build their leadership skills.

6. Year 2 Priorities

Instructions: District improvement requires a targeted investment aligned to the district’s most pressing needs. Please reflect upon district data, the CSDE planning site visit, year one progress, and the needs analysis to identify three to four priority areas for the year two Alliance District plan.

The CSDE has identified three focus areas the second year of the Alliance District program: (1) the transition to Common Core State Standards and new assessments, (2) educator evaluation and support (for both teachers and administrators), and (3) interventions in low-performing schools. Your application must explain how these three areas will be addressed, either through the Alliance District spending plan or via separate district initiatives. Below, identify three to four district-specific priority areas for year two and indicate whether they are new or continued initiatives from year one. Then, explain how these priorities align to and reinforce the district’s broader strategic plan and/or vision.

Priority #1	Implement Data-Driven Decision Making	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continued from Year 1 <input type="checkbox"/> New priority
Priority #2	Increase Rigor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continued from Year 1 <input type="checkbox"/> New priority
Priority #3	Establish a System of Supports for All Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continued from Year 1 <input type="checkbox"/> New priority
Priority #4 (optional)	Establish a Systematic Approach to Parent and Community Engagement	<input type="checkbox"/> Continued from Year 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New priority

Briefly describe how the priorities listed above **support the district’s theory of change** and strategic direction.

The priorities we have selected reflect Hamden’s long-term investment in what we believe are the fundamental elements for improving student achievement: effective teaching strategies informed by data-driven decision making; a rigorous curriculum for all students; a system of supports to help all students succeed; and strong, positive relationships among students, staff, parents and community organizations. Taken together, these four priorities ensure we continually examine how well all of our students are achieving, understand where specific strengths and challenges lie, and tailor and target our resources to elevate student achievement through increased rigor and personalized support for students who need it. By aligning our Alliance activities with our District Improvement Plan and the substantial investment of resources the district has made in these efforts for over three years, we are sustaining and



deepening our consistent focus on closing the achievement gap and improving achievement for all students.

If not explicitly identified as priority areas, explain how the district will address the CSDE's three focus areas for year two of the Alliance District program. Briefly describe the district's strategy and level of preparedness to (1) transition to **Common Core State Standards** and new assessments, and (2) fully implement **educator evaluation and support** systems. You will be asked to describe your district's strategy to intervene in its lowest-performing schools in Section #7.

The CSDE's three focus areas for year two of the Alliance District program are integrated within our priority areas.

Common Core State Standards and New Assessments

The district has been preparing for the transition to the CCSS and the new Smarter Balanced Assessment by redesigning the entire K-12 curricula to increase rigor and align with the CCSS. Within our priority area to Increase Rigor, we are planning additional investments through the Alliance funding to further prepare for this transition. We propose to hire a new Director of Assessment and Intervention who will oversee implementation of the Smarter Balanced Assessments in 2013-14 when Hamden will be a pilot district. We have also proposed significant funding for technology that will ensure we have the basic technology infrastructure needed to implement the new assessments and to provide students with the resources and instruction they need to achieve the 21st century skills and high expectations embedded in the CCSS. In our DDDM priority area, our data teams provide a mechanism for ongoing, embedded professional development in the CCSS led by our literacy and math specialists and data facilitators. We will also invest in additional professional development in the CCSS for our Department Chairs who oversee the specialists and curriculum development.

Teacher Evaluation and Support

The district has also spent a substantial amount of time in the 2012-13 school year preparing to fully implement the new teacher evaluation model next year. Our teacher evaluation committee met regularly for many months to review the SEED requirements, make adaptations as needed for our district, and plan for implementation. Our teacher evaluation plan, which largely adopts the SEED model, is currently being reviewed at the state level. We have begun professional development for administrators in the use of the Common Core of Teaching Instrument and Rubric and effective observation and feedback techniques using Dr. Todd White of PHocuseD on Learning as our training consultant. Our efforts to increase rigor also include ongoing professional development for teachers in using Marzano's effective teaching strategies, which helps to prepare them for the expectations incorporated in the Common Core of Teaching Instrument and Rubric. We are proposing to invest additional Alliance funds in professional development to fully prepare for implementation of the teacher evaluation model in 2013-14. We will use a train the trainers model to prepare a core group of teachers as an expert cadre. These trainers will then work at the school level with principals and staff to ensure they acquire a deep understanding of the teacher evaluation requirements and implementation plan.



Instructions: For each of the priority areas identified in Section #6, identify a core set of strategies that will lead to results and successful implementation. Identify an expected outcome(s) and metrics to track the progress and fidelity with which that strategy is executed. Also indicate when the district will implement that strategy during year two of the Alliance District program (summer 2013, fall 2013, winter 2014, spring 2014, and/or summer 2014). The information provided will serve as the foundation for the year two CSDE support and monitoring.

Priority #1: Insert the year two priority below.
Implement Data-Driven Decision Making
Summary: Briefly describe the district’s comprehensive approach to implement this priority.
<p><u>Build DDDM Capacity and Expertise with Data Facilitators</u></p> <p>HPS has invested substantial resources over the past three years to build the district's capacity to utilize data-driven decision making effectively to advance student achievement. We have made great progress through extensive professional development in the concept and rationale of DDDM for all staff; the creation of instructional and vertical data teams in every school; and participation in CALI. Many of our data teams are advancing beyond basic data analysis to become true professional learning communities that identify and implement appropriate instructional strategies in response to identified needs. The data teams also utilize the internal expertise of our math and literacy specialists and data facilitators to deliver embedded professional development in effective teaching strategies and the CCSS. However, the level of expertise and autonomy of our data teams is inconsistent across schools and staff participation in data team meetings requires the ongoing availability of substitute teachers in the schools.</p> <p>To ensure the continued progress of our DDDM initiative, HPS will continue to employ two part-time data facilitators to provide embedded professional development and support to instructional and vertical data teams. They will focus their support on building the expertise and capacity within each school so that the data teams will be able to operate independently within the next two to three years. In the coming year, there will be a particular focus on providing data teams with embedded professional development addressing the CCSS and how these will be implemented through the new curriculum units (see Increase Rigor below). Data facilitators will also work with all teams to ensure they are focusing on the impact of adult actions to address student needs. These two data facilitators will support the high school and five of our eight elementary schools (Bear Path, Dunbar Hill, Shepherd Glen, Spring Glen, and West Woods, which are not among our lowest performing schools).</p> <p><u>Expand Support for DDDM and SRBI at Tier 1 Elementary Schools</u></p> <p>We will expand support for the data teams at the three Tier 1 elementary schools (Church Street, Ridge Hill and Helen Street) by hiring three full-time Data Facilitator/SRBI Specialists. These three full-time individuals will support the instructional and vertical data teams at their assigned school as described in the paragraph above. In addition, they will provide oversight and coordination for</p>

SRBI tier II and III interventions at the schools. They will ensure that these interventions are being implemented consistently and with fidelity; they will assist data teams and staff with selecting appropriate interventions and making adjustments and changes as needed; and they will provide guidance and embedded professional development to teachers and tutors implementing these interventions. These three elementary schools have significant numbers of students who receive SRBI tier II and III interventions. For example, at Church Street School, about 50% of students receive tier II interventions (approximately 160 students) and 60 students receive tier III interventions; at Ridge Hill, 80 students receive tier II and/or tier III interventions (24%); and at Helen Street, 54 students receive tier II and 11 receive tier III interventions. The schools cannot adequately implement and monitor tier II and III interventions for so many students. The additional coordination and expertise that these new positions will provide will help to ensure that SRBI can achieve its intended purpose of improving student learning.

Invest in Technology to Support DDDM and Other Initiatives

Finally, we propose to invest in much-needed technology upgrades to ensure that staff has the resources they need to readily access and analyze student achievement data to support DDDM, SRBI, implementation of new assessments and CCSS, and other instructional duties. The high school is in dire need of new faculty computers. They currently have desktop computers that are all more than 7 years old and are failing at a rate of two or more per week; student laptops are being pulled for teacher use, thus reducing students' access to technology. Desktop computers are not conducive to the type of team-based, data-driven, meeting-oriented work that is now required of the staff. We propose to purchase laptops for the high school faculty to ensure they have the technological support their job responsibilities have come to require. Having these portable devices will allow high school faculty to use them in data team and SRBI meetings and then easily access student data and artifacts of their work, use technology-based analysis tools, and more readily record and manage student information and interventions.

Outcome Metric: What is the desired result of the implementation of Priority #1?

With the support of the data teams to analyze and target students' needs and promote effective teaching strategies, each school will achieve the State's annual growth target for its SPI. This will demonstrate adequate progress toward the goal of reaching an SPI halfway to 88 from its baseline SPI by 2018.

As a result of effective implementation of DDDM, we will achieve improved outcomes for students as measured by a variety of indicators, such as: growth in standardized test scores; student accomplishment of embedded performance tasks aligned with CCSS; higher attendance rates; decreased rates of behavior referrals and suspensions; and increases in the School Performance Indices (SPI).

DDDM will be used to improve teaching by focusing on the impact of adult actions. During the 2013-14 school year, 100% of vertical and instructional data teams will:

- complete a comprehensive analysis of the performance of students in the school.

- identify the most significant student performance issue based on data analysis.
- determine the most significant adult practice issue contributing to the student performance issue.
- express adult actions as SMART goals.
- monitor progress in achieving SMART goals on a quarterly basis and make adjustments as indicated.

Aligned Strategies: Identify a core set of strategies to implement this district priority.	Progress Metrics: Identify a progress indicator for each strategy.	Timeline:				
		Su `13	F `13	W `14	Sp `14	Su `14
Build DDDM Capacity and Expertise with Data Facilitators	<p>Two part-time data facilitators are hired.</p> <p>Teams reconvene from prior year with orientation/training provided by data facilitator as needed for new members</p> <p>100% of schools have reconvened data teams and established comprehensive meeting schedules as demonstrated by results of data team survey of progress to date.</p> <p>100% of data teams have analyzed student data to identify the most significant student performance issue, the most significant adult practice issue contributing to it, and have established SMART goals for adult actions as demonstrated by results of data team survey of progress to date.</p> <p>Data Facilitators provide coaching, coordination, and embedded professional development related to</p>	X				
			X			
			X			
			X			
				X	X	X

	<p>SMART goals to vertical and instructional data teams.</p> <p>Data teams conduct quarterly reviews of progress toward SMART goals to ensure adequate progress and make adjustments as needed.</p>		X	X	X	X
<p>Expand Support for DDDM and SRBI at Tier 1 Elementary Schools</p>	<p>Three full-time data facilitators/SRBI specialists are hired.</p> <p>Each of the three schools has established an SRBI meeting schedule for the year as determined by a survey of principals and data facilitator/SRBI specialists.</p> <p>100% of specialists have analyzed student data to identify the most significant student performance issue, the most significant adult practice issue contributing to it, and have established SMART goals for adult actions as demonstrated by a survey of principals and specialists.</p> <p>Specialists conduct quarterly reviews of progress toward SMART goals to ensure adequate progress and make adjustments as needed.</p> <p>[Note: Data Facilitators/SRBI Specialists will also fulfill the progress metrics listed above for the part-time Data Facilitators.]</p>	X	X	X	X	X



Invest in Technology to Support DDDM and Other Initiatives	<p>Purchase laptops for high school faculty</p> <p>In a pre- and post-survey, faculty report that the upgraded technology has improved their ability to effectively and efficiently analyze and utilize student information in multiple settings to plan instruction, such as data teams, SRBI meetings, and other planning and preparatory sessions.</p>	X		X	X	
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Priority #2: Insert the year two priority below.

Increase Rigor

Summary: Briefly describe the district’s comprehensive approach to implement this priority.

HPS has undertaken several strategies to implement this priority area.

Redesign Curriculum to Increase Rigor and Align with Common Core State Standards

HPS’ comprehensive approach to increasing rigor for all students has been centered on the revamping of our entire K-12 curricula across all grade levels and content areas using the Understanding by Design approach, ensuring that the new curricula align with the CCSS. Prior to this undertaking, Hamden did not have a consistent curriculum across the district. We felt it was necessary to create a district-wide curriculum to ensure that all students have access to the same rigorous material, high expectations, and shared learning experiences. With increased consistency, we can also provide better support for our teachers and learn from sharing best practices across schools.

Having a full-time math and literacy specialist at each school has been a key component of our efforts. These specialists have developed significant expertise in the CCSS, which they use in helping department chairs and staff write the new curriculum. Additionally, they provide extensive on-site monitoring of curriculum implementation at their respective schools to ensure consistency and fidelity. They also provide embedded professional development, modeling of lesson plans, coaching, and other forms of support to assist teachers as they become familiar with CCSS and the new curricula. These specialists also support the data teams as knowledgeable others who can offer guidance in the selection of effective teaching strategies and interventions to address the needs identified by the teams. HPS will continue to support these specialists with a combination of Alliance funds (4 FTE math specialists)

and LEA funds (5 FTE math specialists and 8 FTE literacy specialists).

In addition to a rigorous curriculum, HPS has emphasized high quality instruction with district-wide professional development in Marzano's effective teaching strategies. Teachers' use of these strategies is reinforced through the embedded professional development provided by literacy and math specialists and through the informal instructional rounds that administrators conduct throughout the year.

While we have made significant progress in our efforts to redesign and implement a new, more rigorous curriculum, it is an ongoing undertaking moving forward on several fronts simultaneously. We have established a process of writing, piloting, revising, approval, and implementation that each new curriculum must go through. Once at the implementation stage, there is continued monitoring for fidelity and consistency of implementation. In order to continue to move forward expeditiously in these efforts, we will use Alliance funds to support additional professional development in CCSS and to compensate teachers for the time they spend in curriculum writing.

Prepare and Support Administrators and Staff in Implementation of the New Teacher Evaluation Model

The implementation of the new teacher evaluation model beginning in 2013-14 will also support our efforts to increase rigor. The high expectations of the CCSS are reflected within the Common Core of Teaching Instrument and Rubric that HPS has adopted, as are the effective teaching strategies in which our staff have been trained. The teacher evaluation model incorporates the use of informal, unannounced observations to provide teachers with more frequent feedback and to help administrators develop a complete and authentic view of a teacher's practice than an isolated formal observation can provide by itself. For the past few years, HPS administrators have adopted the use of frequent, informal observations to monitor the use of key elements of practice. This has fostered a culture of openness and comfort among teachers with being observed that will help the district transition to the requirements of the new evaluation model.

Although the district is well-positioned in these respects to undertake the new teacher evaluation model, it is still a substantial new responsibility for the district that will require significant amounts of training to familiarize all staff with the requirements and expectations of the new model. Administrators will also need extensive training to ensure they are prepared to conduct observations and evaluations appropriately and effectively. We will continue our work with Todd White who is a national consultant in improving teaching and learning. The district administrators and school teams are working with Dr. White to insure that we are calibrated in what constitutes exemplary teaching and learning in every classroom. Additionally, the district will hire and train eight retired administrators to assist in the evaluation process because the number of observations required to rate every teacher in the new system in the first year is overwhelming and cannot be completed solely by current administrators who have substantial other duties.

Increase Coordination and Accountability at the District Level



We will hire a Director of Assessment and Intervention whose responsibilities will include coordinating the development, administration, scoring, and progress monitoring of assessment programs, including oversight of Hamden's participation as a pilot district for the Smarter Balanced Assessments. This will be the Director's focus in 2013-14; however, this individual will play a leadership role that impacts all of our priority initiatives. The Director will work closely with data teams at the individual schools and will participate in the district data team to ensure assessment data is being used effectively to address student needs. He or she will oversee our SRBI initiatives, including providing direction and helping to develop the role of the three new data facilitator/SRBI specialists at our three low-performing elementary schools. He or she will oversee our library media specialists to ensure adequate preparation for Smarter Balanced Assessments and to develop long-range plans for our library media program.

Upgrade Technology to Prepare for Smarter Balanced Assessments

As a pilot district, Hamden is faced with the immediate challenge of insufficient technology to implement these new assessments across the district. We propose to use Alliance resources to help the district acquire the hardware and infrastructure it will need to successfully transition to the Smarter Balanced Assessment in 2013-14. We have focused our technology purchases on our Tier 1 schools (a total of approximately \$500,000 in Alliance resources) and have matched that amount with an additional \$500,000 from the district's capital budget to support the technology needed in the remaining schools. These investments will also support the district across all of its priority initiatives, including improved use of technology to provide differentiated instruction and targeted remedial interventions; more readily accessible use of student data to support data analysis and to plan instruction; and integration of technology across our curriculum to increase rigor and teach the 21st century skills embedded in the CCSS.

Increase Access to High Quality, Affordable Preschool

The district has also developed a plan to ensure that high quality, affordable preschool is available to all families in Hamden who need it. Research demonstrates that an achievement gap already exists when children arrive in kindergarten. Research also demonstrates that the gap is significantly reduced the earlier children attend high quality early childhood programs. Expanding the availability of such preschool programs in our district will help to improve the impact of our K-12 initiatives. We currently offer several preschool options including full-day/full-year programs and school-day/school-year programs. However, Hamden has only 23 school readiness slots for the entire district, which must be allocated to children who will attend Helen Street and Church Street. Other placements are available on a sliding scale. We propose to use Alliance funds to hire another preschool teacher so that, with additional matching funds from the district, we can expand to serve an additional 51 children in 2013-14. We will also establish financial aid for low-income students who live outside the Church and Helen Street area since they do not qualify for School Readiness slots.

Encourage Advanced Coursework at HHS

We also propose to continue support for the high school's RAISES program. Using criteria such as standardized test scores, teacher recommendations, grades, and demonstrated ability, RAISES identifies students from typically under-represented groups to be placed in more advanced courses (including AP courses) than they would otherwise have been placed based on their past performance. Once

chosen to participate, students receive supports such as participation in a Summer Institute, tutoring, training in study skills and time management, and parent involvement activities to help them succeed in higher level classes that will ultimately improve their achievement and increase their opportunities for post-secondary success.

Outcome Metric: What is the desired result of the implementation of Priority #2?

By incorporating student achievement (as measured by the SPI) as an element of every teacher's evaluation, the teachers in each school will work collaboratively to achieve the annual growth target for its SPI set by the State. This will demonstrate adequate progress toward the goal of reaching an SPI halfway to 88 from the school's baseline SPI by 2018. Hamden's teacher evaluation plan uses SPI growth targets as the first Student Learning Objective for all teachers.

By providing a rigorous curriculum to all students using effective teaching strategies, we will achieve improved outcomes for students as measured by a variety of indicators, such as: growth in standardized test scores; student accomplishment of embedded performance tasks aligned with CCSS; higher attendance rates; decreased rates of behavior referrals and suspensions; and increased graduation rate; as well as increases in the School Performance Indices (SPI) as stated above.

Increase the number of students who have high quality preschool experience prior to kindergarten and improve school readiness skills of entering kindergartners.

Students will graduate from high school with the 21st century knowledge and skills they need for post-secondary success.

We will increase in the number of students from under-represented groups enrolled in advanced or AP courses.

RAISES students will complete their advanced or AP level classes with a grade of C or better.

Aligned Strategies: Identify a core set of strategies to implement this district priority.	Progress Metrics: Identify a progress indicator for each strategy.	Timeline:				
		Su `13	F `13	W `14	Sp `14	Su `14
Redesign Curriculum to Increase Rigor and Align with Common Core State Standards	Ensure every unit of study includes a performance task aligned to CCSS and at least a level 3 or 4 on depth of knowledge scale. All teachers will be evaluated in part		X	X	X	



	<p>based on an SLO measured by a performance task aligned to the CCSS. This will help ensure implementation of the new rigorous units of study and to establish accountability for student learning of the redesigned curriculum.</p> <p>Provide additional training for department chairs in CCSS to support curriculum development and prepare for new assessments</p>		<p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	
<p>Prepare and Support Administrators and Staff in Implementation of the New Teacher Evaluation Model</p>	<p>Hire 8 retired administrators to assist in implementation of new teacher evaluation plan</p> <p>Train/norm administrators (and retired administrators) in Common Core of Teaching Instrument and Rubric</p> <p>Conduct training of trainers to prepare 59 teachers as school-based trainers/experts in new teacher evaluation model (will in turn train 600 staff in the new model)</p> <p>By November, all teachers' SLOs will be determined and approved by their respective evaluators.</p> <p>All teachers will be evaluated in part with an SLO measured by a performance task aligned to the CCSS. This will help ensure implementation of the new rigorous units of study and to establish</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>			



	accountability for student learning of the redesigned curriculum.					
Increase Coordination and Accountability at the District Level	Hire Director of Intervention and Assessment	X				
	Meet all benchmarks for implementation of Smarter Balanced Assessments as required of pilot districts		X	X	X	X
Upgrade Technology to Prepare for Smarter Balanced Assessments	Acquire and upgrade hardware and infrastructure needed for Smarter Balanced Assessments and other priority initiatives	X	X			
	Provide necessary training and technical support to staff to utilize new technology		X	X	X	
	Hamden infrastructure and equipment is measured as "optimal for Smarter Balanced Assessments" on the state-required Technology Readiness Tool.			X	X	



Increase Access to High Quality, Affordable Preschool	Hire an additional preschool teacher	X				
	Enroll up to 51 additional Hamden four-year olds in preschool for 2013-14	X				
	Conduct child observations in classroom and other assessments to monitor progress toward kindergarten readiness and other early childhood developmental benchmarks.		X	X	X	X
Encourage Advanced Coursework at HHS	RAISES coordinator will conduct quarterly progress monitoring of RAISES students' grades in advanced and AP classes to ensure adequate performance		X	X	X	X
	Principal and relevant data teams will review reports of RAISES students' performance and recommend additional supports if needed to improve student performance		X	X	X	X

Priority #3: Insert the year two priority below.
Establish a System of Supports for All Students
Summary: Briefly describe the district's comprehensive approach to implement this priority.

The district will invest in several targeted strategies and interventions to support the needs of our most at-risk students and our lowest-performing schools. The overarching purpose of these efforts is to create a system in which all students receive the supports they need to benefit fully from the education provided by HPS.

Extend Learning Opportunities at Our Three Tier 1 Elementary Schools

As discussed above in our Year One accomplishments, Church Street, Helen Street and Ridge Hill all provided after-school programming targeted to students in need of additional individual and small group instruction to improve their school achievement. We will continue to provide these programs, which operate approximately 28 weeks per school year for four days per week. They are literacy-based and use enrichment activities and software such as IReady or Lexia to build stronger literacy skills at the earliest grade levels. Because some students from these schools are enrolled at the Town of Hamden's after-school program at another site, we will also hire a certified teacher to tutor students from these schools at that location. The focus of the tutoring will also be on literacy skills and will be coordinated with the students' teachers to ensure correlation between what is being taught in school and after school. Approximately 120 students (40 per school) will be served by the after-school programs at these locations.

We will also provide a summer program at each of these elementary schools to prevent the summer learning loss that occurs, often in a more pronounced way for students from low-income backgrounds. The specific students, grade levels, and content areas to be targeted will be determined based on the analysis of student performance data at each school. However, we anticipate that literacy will continue to be targeted at the lower grade levels. A total of approximately 120 students (40 per school) will participate in the summer program at the three Tier 1 elementary schools.

These three schools will also continue to offer a four-week kindergarten readiness program in the summer. This program serves incoming kindergartners who have had limited or no prior preschool experience. This program has been implemented at Church Street in the past with very positive reviews from parents and the kindergarten teachers who feel it allows children to become acclimated to the school environment and structure in a very positive, calm manner before the official school year begins when 300+ students will all return to school at the same time. It alleviates the stress of the transition and allows teachers to get an early sense of the children's needs and skill levels, a crucial insight that helps them better place students in classes for the fall. A total of approximately 60 incoming kindergartners (20 per school) will participate in the kindergarten readiness program.

The kindergarten readiness program is part of a broader Transition to Kindergarten initiative that the district undertakes in collaboration with HPYC to increase the continuity between the expectations and curricula of preschool education programs in our area and the district's kindergarten program. This broader initiative will include professional development opportunities for preschool providers and kindergarten staff to share information and to learn more about the expectations for students' entering kindergarten and the CCSS. It also encompasses the kinder-prep program for children and families that includes evening sessions throughout the year

addressing topics related to kindergarten readiness and how to support learning at home. HPYC will also help improve and publicize the kindergarten registration process to be more convenient for families and to gather more useful information from preschool programs about incoming students. We expect the connections we will create among the schools, early care and education providers, and families will increase the support and information available so that more children are prepared for the kindergarten learning environment.

Provide School-Day Support for Students who Need Targeted Interventions

Our three lowest-performing elementary schools have high numbers of students receiving tier II and III SRBI. These interventions are typically provided during our standard intervention block and require the support of tutors to help deliver individualized and small group support and instruction. At these three schools, the new data facilitators/SRBI specialists will work closely with these tutors, as well as the teachers, to help identify appropriate interventions, provide training to tutors and teachers in how to implement them, and monitor their implementation to ensure effectiveness.

We also provide Student Support Centers at each school where students who need help with self-control or behavior in the classroom can receive some one-on-one support. The focus is on helping the student regain self-control, reflect on the behavioral issues, and regroup with a positive plan for returning to the classroom. These centers are staffed by paraprofessionals throughout the school day.

These two components—tutors and student support centers—are critical components of our system of support. Tutors help ensure that all students receive the type of instruction they need to learn effectively, and student support centers provide a safe space for students when a behavioral issue arises so that the classroom can continue without disruption and the student can return with a plan to be constructively engaged.

Additionally, we will use Alliance funds to help support and expand an initiative that originated at Church Street School about three years ago. The Educational Care Collaborative (ECC) is helping to address the social, emotional and behavioral needs of students by strengthening the school-home-community connection with needed mental health services. The ECC includes three primary service components: classroom interventionists (school psychology graduate students from Southern Connecticut State University or Fairfield University) who help teachers address the students' social/emotional needs so that teachers can focus on instruction; Great Start, a program of the Yale Child Study Center, that combines in-home, family interventions and coordination with school personnel; and parent trainings to help parents learn effective ways to address emotional and behavioral concerns their children may exhibit at home. These services complement the existing mental health supports in the school, such as the school psychologist and school social worker, by expanding the array of supports available to teachers and students. The classroom interventionists receive extensive training in addition to their graduate studies and are placed in the highest need classrooms where they are able to intervene with students who demonstrate disruptive social and emotional behaviors prior to them escalating and diverting time away from instruction

to discipline. Students are able to learn positive social and emotional skills, teachers remain focused on instruction rather than discipline, and the overall classroom climate is improved. Additionally, the school psychologist or social worker can refer families to the Great Start program for additional support in the home to help address serious social and emotional issues that interfere with learning. The Great Start program incorporates a regular review of the family's progress with the school staff to promote increased collaboration and understanding between the school and family in addressing the students' needs. Parent trainings, provided in the evenings with child care available, give parents greater access to mental health expertise and additional support to help them learn effective strategies for managing difficult behaviors and to better support student learning. Overall, the ECC is helping to reduce the stigma of mental health issues and to increase the accessibility and utilization of mental health services for students and families so these issues are addressed early and do not create a lifelong barrier to learning. The ECC also receives grant funding from The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven. We plan to expand the program to an additional school in 2013-14.

Promote Positive School Connections to Increase Retention and Improve Student Learning

At Hamden High School, we will continue to focus much of our effort on supporting the transition to high school in the freshman year. In 2012-13, the high school piloted a technology-based credit recovery program using Odysseyware, which provided students with an opportunity to regain the credits needed to advance to the next grade, thus helping to prevent students from falling so far behind that they are more likely to drop out. The pilot revealed the struggle these students have with independent work outside of school so weekly opportunities were offered for students to work in school with an adult present to guide them. In the coming year, we will provide a summer school opportunity for students to use the online credit recovery course to complete ninth grade requirements before the fall, and we will also implement a school-year program overseen by two teachers to provide more structure and guidance for students using this program.

The district will also continue to employ a full-time literacy specialist at the high school and will use Alliance funds to support four full-time literacy tutors. We found this be an effective strategy to increase the literacy skills for struggling freshmen and will expand to four tutors this year in order to continue to serve some students in their sophomore year and to include special education students in the literacy program.

Individualized social-emotional and behavior support is just as critical for freshmen as individualized academic support. Behavioral issues often erupt when students are frustrated or overwhelmed with other aspects of school. We will continue to operate the Freshman Support Center to provide freshmen with a positive, constructive alternative to in-school suspension. At the Freshman Support Center, students can get help in coping with various challenges that commonly arise in the freshman year—time management, study skills, feeling disconnected from the larger student body, and so forth. By redirecting students from disciplinary settings to the support center, we hope to improve their positive connections to school, which will in turn increase their likelihood of academic success and graduation.

Finally, the high school will implement a school-wide Connections curriculum. The goal of this program is to create smaller learning communities that meet regularly in which a core group of adults conduct an advisory and mentoring program, relating to school and personal issues, in order to ensure each student is known well by at least one adult in the building. Staff developed this program based on significant research showing that students' feelings of connectedness and sense of positive interaction are imperative to develop positive decision-making skills. When students feel they are a part of a school, they feel close to people at school, they are healthier and more likely to succeed.

Outcome Metric: What is the desired result of the implementation of Priority #3?

An increased number of students will perform at grade level or higher in reading upon completion of the after-school and/or summer program based on pre- and post-tests administered in these programs and scores from district-wide assessments (such as the DRA2, Fountas & Pinnell, and Blue Ribbon).

An increased number of freshman will be promoted to tenth grade.

An increased number of freshman and sophomores will demonstrate grade-level literacy skills.

By providing a system of supports for all students, we will achieve improved outcomes for students as measured by a variety of indicators, such as: growth in standardized test scores; student accomplishment of embedded performance tasks aligned with CCSS; higher attendance rates; decreased rates of behavior referrals and suspensions; increased graduation rate and increases in the School Performance Indices (SPI).

Aligned Strategies: Identify a core set of strategies to implement this district priority.	Progress Metrics: Identify a progress indicator for each strategy.	Timeline:				
		Su `13	F `13	W `14	Sp `14	Su `14
Extend Learning Opportunities at Our Three Tier 1 Elementary Schools	Implement after-school programs at three Tier I elementary schools		X	X	X	
	Plan and implement summer enrichment and kindergarten readiness program				X	X
	In cooperation with data teams, staff		X	X	X	X

	<p>will review data from assessments such as Blue Ribbon tests, DRA2s, Fountas & Pinnell, and pre- and post-tests administered in after-school or summer learning programs at least quarterly to monitor progress of students in these programs.</p> <p>Collaborate with HPYC to offer kinder-prep series and professional development for early education/day care providers</p>			X	X	
<p>Provide School-Day Support for Students who Need Targeted Interventions</p>	<p>Hire Data Facilitator/SRBI Specialists to coordinate SRBI at three schools</p> <p>Develop and monitor interventions provided during the school day by tutors</p> <p>In cooperation with data teams, specialists review data from assessments such as Blue Ribbon tests, DRA2s, Fountas & Pinnell, and other pre- and post-tests administered by teachers or tutors at least quarterly to monitor progress of students receiving SRBI.</p> <p>Provide positive alternatives to discipline through Student Support Centers</p>	X	X	X	X	X



	Expand ECC activities to an additional school		X	X	X	
Promote Positive School Connections to Increase Retention and Improve Student Learning	Provide Summer School Credit Recovery program	X				
	Plan a school-year credit recovery program with increased structure and adult monitoring to promote completion	X				
	Implement school-year credit recovery program		X	X	X	
	Credit recovery program instructors will monitor student progress in completing online courses and provide quarterly reports to data teams and building administrators of each student's progress toward completion of missing credits		X	X	X	X
	Continue and expand high school literacy program		X	X	X	
	In cooperation with data teams, the literacy specialist at HHS will review data from assessments such as Blue Ribbon tests, Fountas & Pinnell, and pre- and post-tests administered in tutoring sessions at least quarterly to monitor progress of freshman and sophomores receiving literacy tutoring.		X	X	X	X



	Continue to provide Freshman Support Center		X	X	X	
	Twice annually, HHS teachers and students using the Student Support Center will be surveyed to assess levels of homework completion and satisfaction levels with student support services.		X		X	
	Implement Connections program school-wide		X		X	

Priority #4 (optional): Insert the year two priority below.

Establish a Systematic Approach to Parent and Community Engagement

Summary: Briefly describe the district’s comprehensive approach to implement this priority.

The district has a parent engagement subcommittee that has developed goals for improving parent engagement in their children's education and learning process by creating a more systematic approach to parent communications and outreach at the district level. The district has also identified the need to better engage with community organizations so that school and community resources can be deployed collaboratively to better serve Hamden's families.

Empower Parents with Improved Communication and Resources

- The parent subcommittee goals include:
- Provide parents/guardians with information on the Common Core standards and strategies that will support their child’s academic development.
 - Establish parent support subcommittees at each school to address the needs of at-risk students and to provide direct outreach to their parents/families.
 - Create uniform HPS letters/notifications in order to improve home/school communication and consistency within the district.
 - Collaborate with PTA Council and individual PTAs to develop a Parent University which will provide parent

workshops/forums on a variety of topics including: child development, effective parenting, supporting learning, etc.

- Provide Back to School orientation sessions for K – 6th, 7th & 9th grade parents.
- Develop a new plan for Parent-Teacher conferences (goal-setting, sharing student progress, etc) in alignment with the report card schedule (K – 6).

The subcommittee will continue to pursue implementation of these goals over the next year, but we are not requesting Alliance funds to support these activities.

Collaborate with Community Organizations to Coordinate Resources for Parents/Families

The district has also developed a partnership with the public library to upgrade the children's section so that it serves as a true Early Learning Center for families and young children. We propose to allocate \$100,000 to assist the library in making these renovations and improvements. The focus will be expanding the children's space to include more manipulatives, books, puzzles and toys for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to entice families to visit the library early on in their child's life. It will include expanded programs to draw young families to the library and the children's room will become a family community meeting place. Hamden's Family Resource Center staff will assist with parent training. Parents and other caregivers should think "library" as one of the first places they can go to for recreation, learning, networking, and bonding with their young children. They should find the resources they need to learn about pre-reading skills, and then to work with their children so that those skills are taught and the children are prepared when they enter school. The idea that the library is a place where they are welcome will then be instilled in them at an early age, and they will continue to feel that way as they enter and go through the school system.

By providing the library with the financial assistance and educational expertise it needs to reinvigorate its children's section, the district will work collaboratively with the library director to ensure that the new materials and resources support the CCSS and prepare young children for the curriculum and expectations they will encounter in HPS. Establishing this Early Learning Center aligns with our focus on promoting and improving pre-school experiences and engaging parents as their children's first teachers. Hamden's mayor and the new director of the library have pledged their full support and cooperation in this initiative and are appreciative of the district's willingness to invest in this resource with Alliance funds because the Town's severe financial difficulties make it impossible for the Town of Hamden to do so at this time.

Outcome Metric: What is the desired result of the implementation of Priority #4?

Parents are informed and active participants in their children's education as measured by parent surveys



Parents have access to community resources that will help them support their children's learning as measured by parent surveys						
Improved outcomes for students as measured by a variety of indicators, such as: growth in standardized test scores; higher attendance rates; decreased rates of behavior referrals and suspensions; increased graduation rate; and increases in the School Performance Indices (SPI).						
Aligned Strategies: Identify a core set of strategies to implement this district priority.	Progress Metrics: Identify a progress indicator for each strategy.	Timeline:				
		Su `13	F `13	W `14	Sp `14	Su `14
Empower Parents with Improved Communication and Resources	Disseminate a parent brochure and online resources related to CCSS		X			
	Begin planning of parent subcommittees at schools				X	
	Create uniform parent communications on district policies		X			
	Begin planning Parent University			X		
	Begin planning new parent-teacher conference format					X
Collaborate with Community Organizations to Coordinate Resources for Parents/Families	Consult with library to plan redesign of children's room into early learning center	X	X			
	Begin renovation process			X		
	Provide ongoing input into the materials and programming needed at early learning center		X	X	X	
	Collaborate with library to plan appropriate programs and parent training opportunities		X	X	X	



7. School Turnaround Strategy

Instructions: Describe the district’s strategy or approach to school improvement. Using the spaces provided below, explain how the district will support and enable dramatic school improvement, focusing resources and attention on the district’s chronically underperforming schools. In Appendix B, districts with Review and Turnaround schools will be asked to identify a strategy to develop school-specific plans for identified school.

Explain the **district’s capacity** to support school turnaround. Specifically, how is the central office structured to drive significant gains in the district’s lowest-performing schools?

HPS has the capacity to support school improvement because it has aligned its efforts around the four theories of change in its District Improvement Plan (DIP). This has helped us to ensure that the exclusive focus of all our efforts is to increase student achievement. The school-level improvement plans all connect to and complement the District Improvement Plan to form a district-wide strategy for improving student performance and closing the achievement gap that takes into account the specific needs of students at each school. In our Alliance plan, we follow the same four priorities defined in our District Improvement Plan. Alliance funding has provided an opportunity for HPS to build upon, deepen, and expand our efforts in our four strategic priority areas.

The Central Office is structured to promote close interaction with the schools and to respond to input from the schools about their needs and challenges. Resources are allocated in the budgeting process around the four theories of change in our DIP with more resources being directed to the lower-performing schools. Our department chairs are designated by grade level (elementary, middle and high school) so that they work closely with the teachers and focus on specific instructional needs at each level. We deploy our math and literacy specialists as resident experts in our schools who provide a strong connection between district-level initiatives (such as Alliance activities, DDDM, and CCSS) and their understanding and implementation at the school level.

The addition of a Director of Intervention and Assessment will help the district continue to manage school improvement effectively as we also undertake the significant new responsibilities associated with the CCSS, teacher evaluation, and Smarter Balanced Assessments. This individual will have a 092 Administrative certification and substantial knowledge and experience in areas such as data analysis, student assessment and intervention, and school accountability requirements. He or she will perform a leadership role in the implementation of Smarter Balanced Assessments and SRBI in the district including responsibility for developing, administering, scoring and progress monitoring of district assessment systems; oversight and analysis of federal, state and local mandated assessments; consultation and support for the planning and implementation of SRBI and student interventions, particularly in collaboration with the three new data facilitator/SRBI specialists at our Tier 1 elementary schools; and planning and coordination of the district's library media program to ensure appropriate technology is in place to support these efforts. In addition to providing district-level leadership to the initiatives within his or her purview, this individual will work directly with school-level administrators and library media specialists in particular to assist them in implementation of assessment systems and to guide media specialists in long-term planning for technology and content of library media programs.



Describe the **district's school turnaround strategy**. How will the district differentiate support and accountability for its schools? How does this relate the district's overall theory of change? What new flexibility and resources will low-performing schools receive?

Our lowest-performing schools include three elementary schools (Church Street, Helen Street and Ridge Hill) and the district's one high school, Hamden High School. Our Alliance resources have been allocated to advance district-wide initiatives (DDDM, Increased Rigor, and Parent/Community Engagement) that will improve overall student achievement, and to target the higher level of need at our lowest-performing schools. This occurs primarily through our third priority area, Establish a System of Supports for All Students.

The elementary schools receive additional resources to conduct after-school remediation and summer enrichment programs for lower-performing students and a summer kindergarten readiness program for incoming students. They will each have a full-time data facilitator/SRBI specialist dedicated to their school to manage their larger portfolios of students receiving interventions and to help ensure SRBI is implemented effectively based on analysis of student achievement data.

The high school has focused its additional resources on the freshman year through the Freshman Support Center and the literacy tutors. It will expand supports this year to other grade levels with an additional literacy tutor, the Connections program (which serves all students), and continued support for its online credit-recovery program.

The district is also working to expand the availability of high quality, affordable preschool in Hamden to increase the number of children who arrive in kindergarten ready to learn and to increase the likelihood of success in our K-12 school improvement initiatives.

Our approach supports our theories of change by striving to simultaneously build a strong educational system for all students based on a rigorous curriculum and high-quality instruction, while also targeting resources toward the most at-risk students to ensure each student has access to the support he or she needs to learn and succeed.

Administrators from our low-performing schools have participated in all of our Alliance District planning meetings. They have significant input in selecting the types of interventions and support they feel are most needed at their schools and how best to implement them. As a result, they have a strong sense of ownership of our Alliance plan; it is not viewed as one more initiative they must carry out, but is embraced as a much needed source of additional assistance.

These schools are held accountable for their Alliance activities in several ways. The principals meet regularly with the Superintendent of Teaching and Learning to review implementation, discuss concerns, and identify areas for improvement. Because the Alliance activities are all aligned to the School Improvement Plans (SIPs), they are routinely monitored at the school level by the instructional and vertical data teams which are constantly reviewing, updating and revising their SIPs based on their analysis of student performance data. The data teams conduct progress monitoring through the use of SMART goals established at the beginning of the school year to address the most significant student performance issues in each school. SMART goals differ based on the specific academic needs of the students at each school; however, scores from Blue Ribbon tests, DRA2s, and Fountas & Pinnell are



examples of the types of assessment results that data teams use. They also analyze results of performance tasks and unit tests embedded in the curriculum.

The work of the school-based teams is saved on a shared drive and accessed by the district data team, which meets monthly to monitor the work of the school-based teams and overall progress toward the DIP. The district data team includes central office administrators, school-based administrators, data facilitators, teachers, and our State technical assistance staff. It is organized into four subcommittees (DDDM, Rigor, System of Supports, and Parent Engagement). These are aligned with our four theories of change/Alliance priority areas so that each area of our DIP and Alliance plan has the focused oversight of dedicated team with personnel from across the district.

8. Accountability and Support

Instructions: Explain how the district will promote accountability and ongoing progress monitoring to ensure the successful implementation of the Alliance District plan and school-specific improvement plans. What systems and processes are in place or will be developed to promote optimal accountability? At the district level, who will be responsible for ensuring that these systems and processes are executed throughout the year?

Explain the **district-level** monitoring strategy.

We have several mechanisms in place for monitoring implementation of our aligned efforts under the DIP, SIPs, and Alliance plan, which are overseen by the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents.

As described above, our data team process is organized around the SIPs and DIP, which provide the framework for data team analysis. School-based teams send representatives to the monthly district data team meeting and all SIPs and the DIP are regularly updated and shared based on the work of these teams.

The Core Team, which is comprised of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, and Directors, meets weekly to discuss, problem solve, and strategize around any issues that arise in the district related to our theories of action.

The Senior Leadership team involves the Core Team plus building principals who meet monthly to conduct strategic planning, problem-solving, and budget deliberations.

The Administrative Council, comprised of all administrators, also meets regularly and is an important forum for sharing information and progress reports for district initiatives; sharing best practices among schools; and providing some professional development and support to help administrators successfully fulfill their SIPs.

The Core Team also meets twice per month with the Hamden Education Association so there is regular discussion and exchange of ideas with the union about the impact of district activities on teachers.

Describe the district's strategy for **monitoring schools**.

In addition to the monitoring strategies provided by the data team process and various leadership team meetings, all administrators participate in instructional rounds. Teams of administrators visit at least one school per month to observe instruction in several classrooms, paying particular attention to the use of effective instructional strategies and implementation of new curriculum. They then reflect upon and discuss their observations as a means to monitor the execution of these key areas in the district's approach to improving student achievement.

Our math and literacy specialists also provide on-site monitoring because they are housed at the school, where they observe and support curriculum implementation, data team processes, and SRBI. Because they are responsible for providing embedded professional development in these key priority areas, they are able to assist staff in successfully implementing the SIP and Alliance activities and can also provide



insight and feedback to the district on where improvements or additional supports are needed.

How can the **CSDE support the implementation** of the Alliance District plan and school-specific turnaround plans? Specifically, what trainings and technical assistance would you suggest the CSDE provide to school- and/or district-level staff?

We have a need for ongoing, quality training in the components of the Teacher Evaluation model. In particular, we would like additional training in the creation of SLOs and other strategies to enhance the teaching/learning process. We would benefit from opportunities to share best practices with other districts, especially related to effective interventions. Additional professional development in the Common Core Standards and good practice related to these would also be useful.

We also feel it is very important for CSDE to do whatever possible to review and approve plans in a timely manner and to provide access to funds as soon as possible so that implementation can proceed on schedule, hiring can occur prior to the school year, and we can avoid gaps in service from year to year.

9. Budget

Instructions: Please complete and submit the Excel budget workbook as a part of the year two Alliance District application package. Follow the instructions outlined below.

1. **Budget Summary:** Please use the Excel budget workbook to provide a high-level budget summary that identifies the costs associated with each of the strategies outlined in Section 6.
2. **Budget for Alliance District Funding (for new priorities and the expansion of existing priorities):** For each strategy that will be launched or expanded with Alliance District funding, please provide a line-by-line budget that details the use of the Alliance District funding for 2013-2014, as well as the use of other funds and leveraging of efficiencies. For each initiative, provide a cost basis, identify any/all funding streams that will support the strategy, and indicate which priority area(s) the expenditure support. Note that the total of the budgets should equal a substantial majority of the Alliance District Funding allocated to the district.
3. **Budget for Alliance District Funding for Other Purposes:** In the event that your budget proposes using any Alliance District funds for purposes other than new reforms, or the expansion of existing reforms, please attach an operating budget for these uses for 2013-2014. Also provide a one-page summary explaining the need for such expenditures. Please note that any expenditure of Alliance District funds not allocated for the initiation or expansion of reform initiatives must be justified in this summary. *(Districts may submit operating budget for 2013-14 in electronic format only).*

Note: *The total of the budgets provided in Parts 2 and 3 should equal the total Alliance District funding allocated to the district.*

4. **Total Alliance District Funding Budget:** Provide an ED114 budget that includes all Alliance District funding expenditures. The total of this ED114 budget should equal the sum of the budgets provided in Parts 2 and 3 and should equal the total Alliance District funding allocated to the district.

10. Stakeholder Engagement

Instructions: Please describe stakeholder engagement throughout the planning process. Provide evidence that collective bargaining units, school and district personnel, School Governance Councils, Parent Advisory Councils, parents, students, and community members were engaged in the planning process and/or are aware the contents of this plan.

The core activities of Hamden's Alliance plan for year two of the initiative remain the same as in year one. These activities were developed out of a district-wide planning process for the District Improvement Plan and consultation with multiple stakeholders about the use of Alliance resources. The following stakeholders were consulted in the initial planning process: principals and other building administrators, curriculum directors and district administrators, teacher's union, Board of Education members (including student representatives), Family Resource Center staff, the Town of Hamden, Hamden's Partnership for Young Children (HPYC), and parents. Overall, stakeholders agreed that the district should focus on advancing its existing framework as articulated in our District and School Improvement Plans. Their specific input is summarized below.

Elementary principals expressed a need for: extended learning time through targeted after-school and summer programs for students performing at or below grade level on DRA2, CMT, and other assessments; stronger development of early literacy skills; increased capacity and experience of instructional data teams; help with parent engagement; and dedicated math specialists for each school.

High School administrators expressed a need for expanded academic supports such as after-school homework assistance and reading tutors as well as data team facilitation to address the complexities of data team work at the high school level and to deepen the experience of the existing teams.

Curriculum directors and district administrators expressed a need for: additional content and curriculum development expertise to monitor and support implementation of new UBD curricula; professional development to improve teachers' use of effective instructional strategies and to strengthen the content expertise of teachers, especially in math; and improved articulation between preschool and kindergarten programs in Hamden.

Teacher's Union expressed a need for: increased student supports including extending learning time to after-school and summer; increased Family Resource Center services; strong teacher involvement in establishing a new evaluation system; and professional development that is relevant and differentiated.

Board of Education members have a strong desire to have student outcomes improve academically and behaviorally, with a particular focus on the high school and outcomes in grade 10.

Family Resource Center/Town of Hamden/HPYC see a need for more individualized parent outreach strategies; improved the transition from early care and education providers to kindergarten; and increased articulation between preschool programs and kindergarten expectations and standards.

Parents were involved through the PTA Council in the development of our District Improvement Plan,



which is founded on the same three initiatives as our Alliance plan. They reviewed and approved the DIP. They expressed a strong desire to have representatives from all the schools participate in the PTA Council on a regular basis, which has improved this year. They also understood the need for providing a higher level of services to those schools with greater need and lower student achievement.

The planning process for Hamden's second year as an Alliance District was led by a team that included the president of the Hamden Education Association, administrators from each of the Tier 1 schools (Hamden High School and three elementary schools, Church Street, Helen Street and Ridge Hill); the Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; and the Directors of Instruction, Instructional Technology, and Finance.

During the course of the 2012-13 school year, the administrators of each of the Tier 1 schools discussed the Alliance activities with their PTAs and School Governance Councils. The Superintendent briefed the Mayor of Hamden on the Alliance District initiative, and she provides regular updates to the members of the Board of Education as well.

This year's plan is also shaped by the extensive opportunities for ongoing progress monitoring and feedback that occur in the district's daily operations, which include administrators, teachers, pupil personnel staff, specialists and others from all schools. Since these activities (such as school and district data team meetings and the Administrative Council) are centered around the District and School Improvement Plans, which align with our Alliance priorities, we feel we are well-informed about the accomplishments, needs, and progress of our activities.



PART III: APPENDIX SECTION

A. Statement of Assurances

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

PROJECT TITLE: HAMDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS ALLIANCE DISTRICT PLAN

THE APPLICANT: HAMDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS HEREBY ASSURES THAT:

HAMDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(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)
 - 1) References in this section to “contract” shall mean this grant agreement and references to “contractor” shall mean the Grantee.

For the purposes of this section, “Commission” means the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

For the purposes of this section “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 section 32-9n; and "good faith" means that degree of diligence which a reasonable person would exercise in the performance of legal duties and obligations. “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.

2) (a) 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, mental retardation 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. 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, mental retardation, 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; (b) 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; (c) 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 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; (d) the contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this section and sections 46a-68e and 46a-68f and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to sections 46a-56, 46a-68e and 46a-68f; (e) 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 section 46a-56.

3) 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.

4) The contractor shall develop and maintain adequate documentation, in a manner prescribed by the Commission, of its good faith efforts.

5) The contractor shall include the provisions of section (2) above 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 section 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.

6) The contractor agrees to comply with the regulations referred to in this section as the term of this contract and any amendments thereto as they exist on the date of the contract and as they may be adopted or amended from time to time during the term of this contract and any amendments thereto.

7) (a) 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 of the state of Connecticut, and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their sexual orientation; (b) 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; (c) the contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this section and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to section 46a-56; (d) 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 section 46a-56.

8) The contractor shall include the provisions of section (7) above 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 section 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)* Frances M. Rabinowitz _____

Title: *(typed)* Superintendent, Hamden Public Schools _____

Date: _____