

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Hartford**

**TO:** State Board of Education

**FROM:** Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell  
Commissioner of Education

**DATE:** December 6, 2017

**SUBJECT:** State Board of Education Comprehensive Plan – Goal 1 Update

**Executive Summary**

**Introduction**

The Connecticut State Board of Education’s Five-year Comprehensive Plan, *Ensuring Equity and Excellence for All Connecticut Students*, adopted in July 2016, represents the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) commitment to Connecticut citizens, communities, and local school districts’ efforts to provide every student in our state an exceptional education in an outstanding school. The aspirational goals of the Board’s Comprehensive Plan are:

1. Ensuring that students’ non-academic needs are met so that they are healthy, happy, and ready to learn.
2. Making sure all students learn what they need to know to succeed in college, career, and life.
3. Giving all students access to great teachers and school leaders.
4. Supporting schools and districts in staying on target with learning goals.

Immediately following the adoption of the Board’s Comprehensive Plan, the CSDE began extensive planning using a system of performance management focused on achieving defined results. By operationalizing the Board’s aspirational goals into actionable steps, the CSDE will improve the quality of execution and systematically manage, monitor, and deliver on the Board’s Five-year Comprehensive Plan. For each Board goal, the CSDE developed delivery plans that include:

- Up to three strategies that are specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, and time-limited.
- Specific activities affiliated with each strategy.
- “Delivery chains,” including the specific people and/or organizations necessary to deliver the activities affiliated with the strategies.
- Appropriate metrics with which to evaluate progress toward the goal.
- Roles and routines to keep the CSDE focused on achieving the goal:
  - roles include goal owner, strategy lead, delivery plan facilitator;
  - routines include use of the assessment of progress tool, planning meetings, updates to the Commissioner and the State Board of Education.

## **Background on Board Goal 1 and Strategy**

**Goal #1 of the State Board Comprehensive Plan is “Ensuring that students’ non-academic needs are met so that they are healthy, happy, and ready to learn.” The team identified the following powerful strategies to support some of Connecticut’s most vulnerable students:**

### **Strategy 1:**

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Description: Implement the newly developed “Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings” to improve outcomes by addressing the overall well-being of students, which will result in improved attendance rates and positive impact on graduation rates.

Definition of Success: 100% implementation of guidelines and reduction of chronic absenteeism.

Activities:

- Develop guidance related to students who are expelled.
- Develop a community of practice for the alternative school/program leaders.
- Develop public and private partnerships to provide support.
- Use Next Generation Student Supports to address needs.

Impact: Improved student engagement as evidenced by increased attendance rates.

Metric: By June 2021, the chronic absenteeism rate for alternative schools and settings will be below 40%.

2017-18 Sub-Target: Reduce the chronic absenteeism rate from 60.3% to 54.3% by June of 2018.

### **Strategy 2:**

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Description: Implement tiered systems of support in areas of attendance, school discipline, restorative and trauma-informed practices that remove barriers to success and maximize student potential.

Definition of Success: Improved attendance, reduction of suspensions and expulsions, utilization of trauma-informed practices and improved coordination of services for students.

Activities:

- Develop state-level tiered intervention models.
- Provide training on implementation.
- Expand partnerships and community supports.
- Develop trauma-informed practice guidelines.

Impact: Increased attendance and positive impact on graduation rates.

Metric: By June 2021, reduce the statewide chronic absenteeism rate to 6.5%.

By June 2021, reduce the statewide out-of-school suspension (OSS) rate to 4.5%; reduce the number of OSS’ in Grades K-2 to 80, and reduce the number of PreK OSS’ to zero.

2017-18 Sub-Targets:

- Reduce the chronic absenteeism rate from 9.9% to 8.0% by June 2018.
- Reduce the statewide OSS rate from 6.5% to 6%; reduce the K-2 OSS number from 629 to 479; and reduce the PreK OSS number to zero.

### **Strategy 3:**

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Description: Support student academic achievement and school improvement through effective school, family and community partnerships.

Definition of Success: Families, districts, schools and community partners are able to cultivate and sustain active, respectful, effective and equitable partnerships that foster school improvement, link to educational objectives, and support children’s learning and development.

Activities:

- Continue the Commissioner’s Roundtable on Family and Community Engagement.
- Continue the monthly Community and Family Engagement meetings, called Friday CAFEs, with district and school family engagement liaisons, and evaluate impact.
- Convene and evaluate impact of an additional series of monthly meetings with district leaders, school leaders, and family engagement liaisons from the Opportunity Districts.
- Develop educators’ capacity to lead family and community engagement efforts through training related to high-impact practices including: Creating Welcoming Schools, Linking to Learning, and conducting parent-teacher home visits.
- Survey school staff and families with the Welcoming Schools Tool in the Opportunity Districts. The Welcoming Schools Tool will be administered for the first time in January 2018 to develop baseline data, and will be administered annually thereafter to evaluate the impact of the family and community engagement activities.

Impact: Evidence from research indicates that when families are engaged, students have higher grades and test scores, better attendance, and higher rates of homework completion. These students also enroll in more challenging classes, have better social skills and behavior, and are more likely to graduate and go on to college.

Metric: By June 2021, increase the scores by 40% of parents and staff in Opportunity Districts on the Welcoming Schools Tool in all four domains (environment, practices and policies, welcoming staff, and written materials).

2017-18 Sub-Target: Increase the parent and staff scores on the Welcoming Schools Tool in all four domains by June 2018. Target will be set based on the baseline data obtained in January 2018.

## **Goal Progress Update**

### Assessment Framework Ratings

Using a progress assessment framework and rubric to evaluate the likelihood of success on Goal # 1, the goal leader and strategy leads rated each strategy for (1) quality of planning; (2) capacity to drive progress; and (3) evidence of implementation progress.

The summary rating for progress on Goal 1 at the time of the Commissioner’s Stock Take meeting on October 10, 2017, is on the following page.

## Assessment Framework Rating Template

### Goal 1: Supports of Students' Non-Academic Needs

Area of Focus	Overall likelihood of success	Summary rationale
Alternative Settings	Yellow	The goal is to reduce chronic absenteeism from over 60% to under 40% over the next four years. This is a 65% reduction in the number of chronically absent students in alternative settings. Reaching the goal received a yellow rating because it is an ambitious goal. In addition, many students in alternative settings miss a large number of school days. In some cases a student's attendance may improve dramatically and the student may still be chronically absent.
Next Generation Student Supports	Green	These are 2 high priority areas that have received a great deal of attention at all educational levels. There is a focus on reducing absenteeism and exclusionary discipline and awareness of these issues is creating momentum and driving actions that will lead to reaching the goals.
Family and Community Engagement	Yellow	The Department's education consultant who focuses on family and community engagement is a national expert in the field. Efforts to improve family and community engagement are well underway. This strategy received a yellow rating due to temporarily limited staff capacity.
Overall likelihood of achieving our goals	Yellow	It is likely that the three OSSOE strategy profiles will be successfully implemented given the quality of planning, capacity, and progress made to date. The overall likelihood of success is rated as yellow because there is significant work to be accomplished.

As seen in the Rating Summary above, progress has been made in all areas of focus. “The Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings” were developed, approved by the State Board of Education, distributed, and presented to leaders of alternative settings during a Community of Practice meeting. Connecticut is recognized as a national leader in addressing chronic absence, which is an indicator in the Next Generation School Accountability System. Significant professional development and strategic efforts continue to occur in this area. Reducing exclusionary discipline has also received noteworthy attention. A tiered intervention model has been developed and is being implemented. In the area of family engagement, the Commissioner’s Roundtable and the Friday CAFEs are well-established avenues where state, district, and/or school-based leaders address important issues including ways to improve family and community engagement in education. One choke point is in the area of family and community engagement. Progress has slowed temporarily due to limited staff capacity.

Following the Stock Take meeting with Commissioner Wentzell on October 10, feedback was received. It included the following:

- develop a rubric for best practices to improve attendance in alternative settings, including the development of an attendance awareness campaign;
- create and provide additional supports for alternative settings in the areas of trauma-informed practices and social/emotional learning;
- develop a tiered system of support for alternative education programs;
- compile program-level data for alternative settings and review data at Community of Practice meetings;
- ensure that districts understand that the definition of absence no longer includes in-school suspension;
- engage the State Student Advisory Council on Education to conduct research related to school discipline;
- research the tools that Opportunity Districts are using to measure climate and family engagement;
- develop a tiered system of support for family and community engagement for the Opportunity Districts;

- develop a five-question survey to use with local family engagement liaisons;
- conduct focus groups with families to better understand their experiences with schools; and
- develop training for school secretaries about enrollment, attendance and engagement.

The strategy profiles are currently being modified to incorporate the Commissioner’s feedback.

**Next Steps**

The next update to the State Board of Education on this goal will be in August 2018. Between now and then, the following actions are planned:

- Modify the strategy profiles to reflect feedback received.
- Implement the year-one activities of the strategy profiles.
  - Alternative Schools:
    - Partner with the Connecticut Association of Schools and the State Education Resource Center to launch and promote the attendance awareness campaign, beginning in November 2017.
    - Convene Community of Practice meetings: November 28, 2017; January 18, 2018; February 8, 2018; March 12, 2018; and April 19, 2018.
    - Provide additional supports related to trauma-informed practices and social/emotional learning.
  - Next Generation Student Supports
    - Train cross-agency team to implement tiered support model.
    - Recognize schools making significant headway in reducing chronic absenteeism and exclusionary discipline.
    - Develop guidance for districts on alternatives to suspension including restorative practices.
  - Family and Community Engagement
    - Convene additional monthly family and community engagement professional development for district and school Opportunity District leaders. Training will focus on Creating Welcoming Schools.
    - Administer Welcoming Schools Tool to create baseline data in January 2018 and again in June 2018 to collect end-of-year data.
    - Create webinars for school principals and school office staff.
- Meet with strategy leads and other involved staff to conduct stock takes on a regular basis to monitor the implementation process, progress toward the targets and sub-targets for each strategy profile, and make changes to plans if necessary.

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Education Division Director

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 Charlene Russell-Tucker  
 Chief Operating Officer



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# **State Board of Education Five-year Comprehensive Plan**

***Goal 1 Update  
Addressing the Non-Academic  
Needs of Students***

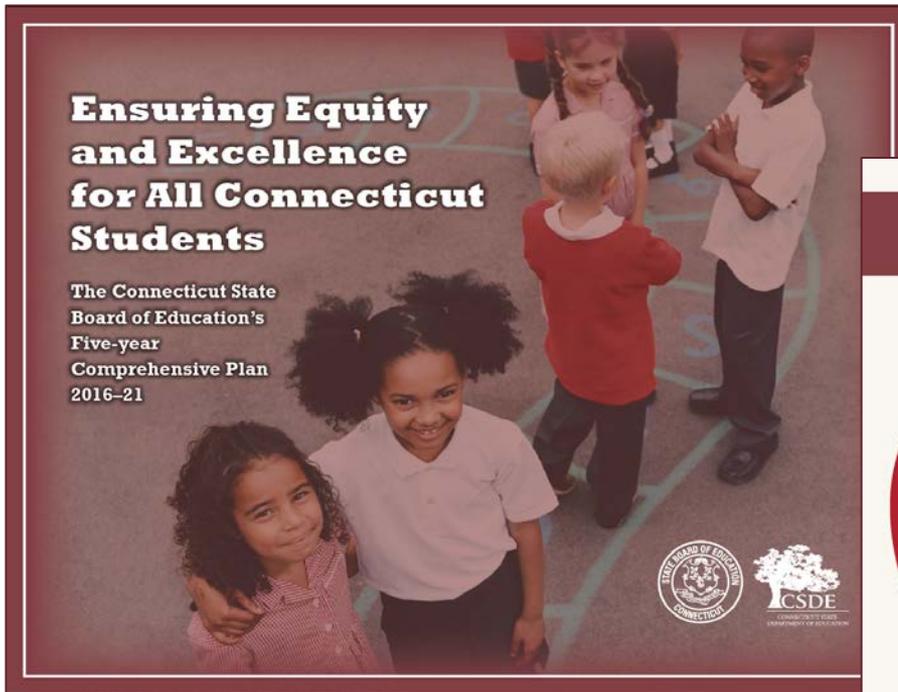
**December 6, 2017**

# Presentation Focus

- What is **Goal 1** of the Board's Comprehensive Plan?
- What are the **strategies** to achieve it?
- What are the **primary activities** supporting those strategies?
- What are the **goals and targets** aligned to those strategies?



# Goal 1: Addressing the Non-Academic Needs of Students



**Ensuring Equity and Excellence for All Connecticut Students**

The Connecticut State Board of Education's Five-year Comprehensive Plan 2016-21

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
CONNECTICUT

CSDE  
CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



At the Connecticut State Department of Education, students are at the core of everything we do.

**OUR PROMISE TO OUR STUDENTS**

- Ensuring their non-academic needs are met so they are healthy, happy, and ready to learn. (Mental health, nutrition, after-school programs)
- Supporting their school and district in staying on target with learning goals. (Education Cost Sharing - ECS, Alliance Districts, Commissioner's Network, School Choice)
- Giving them access to great teachers and school leaders.
- Making sure they learn what they need to know to succeed in college, career, and life.

CSDE  
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[The Connecticut State Board of Education's Five-year Comprehensive Plan 2016-21](#)

# Operationalization

- **Powerful strategies** that are **specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, and time-limited**
- **Specific activities** affiliated with each strategy
- **“Delivery chains”** to deliver the activities affiliated with the strategies
- Appropriate **metrics**
- **Roles and routines** to keep the CSDE focused on achieving the goal



## **Strategy 1:**

Implement the newly developed **“Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings”** to improve outcomes by addressing the overall well-being of students, which will result in improved attendance rates and positive impact on graduation rates.



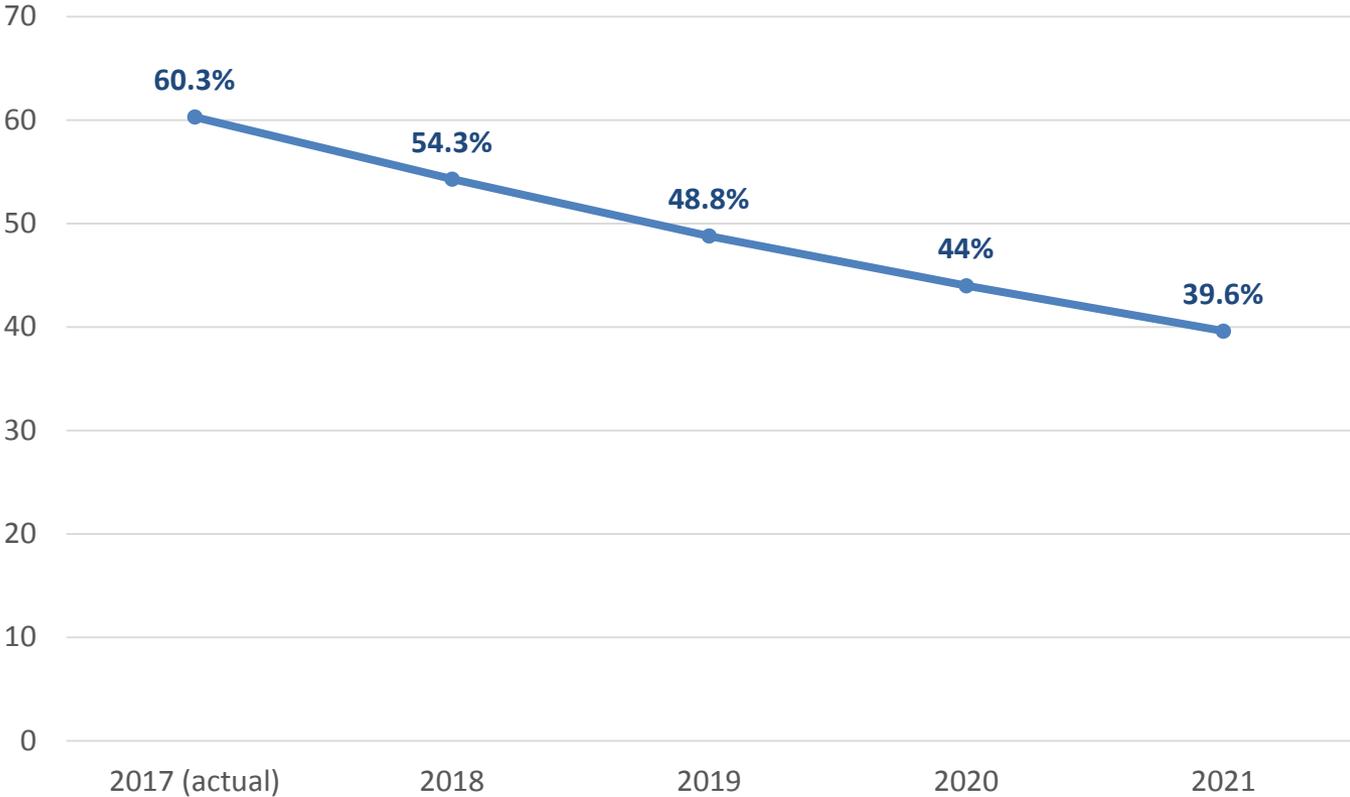
# Strategy 1 Primary Activities

1. Develop and implement **guidance related to students who are expelled.**
2. Develop and convene five **Professional Learning Community meetings** each year.
3. Develop **public and private partnerships** to provide support.
4. Use **Next Generation Student Supports** to address student needs.



# Strategy 1 Goals and Targets

## Projected Chronic Absenteeism in Alternative Settings



## **Strategy 2:**

**Implement Next Generation Student Supports** in areas of attendance, restorative and trauma-informed practices that remove barriers to success and maximize student potential.

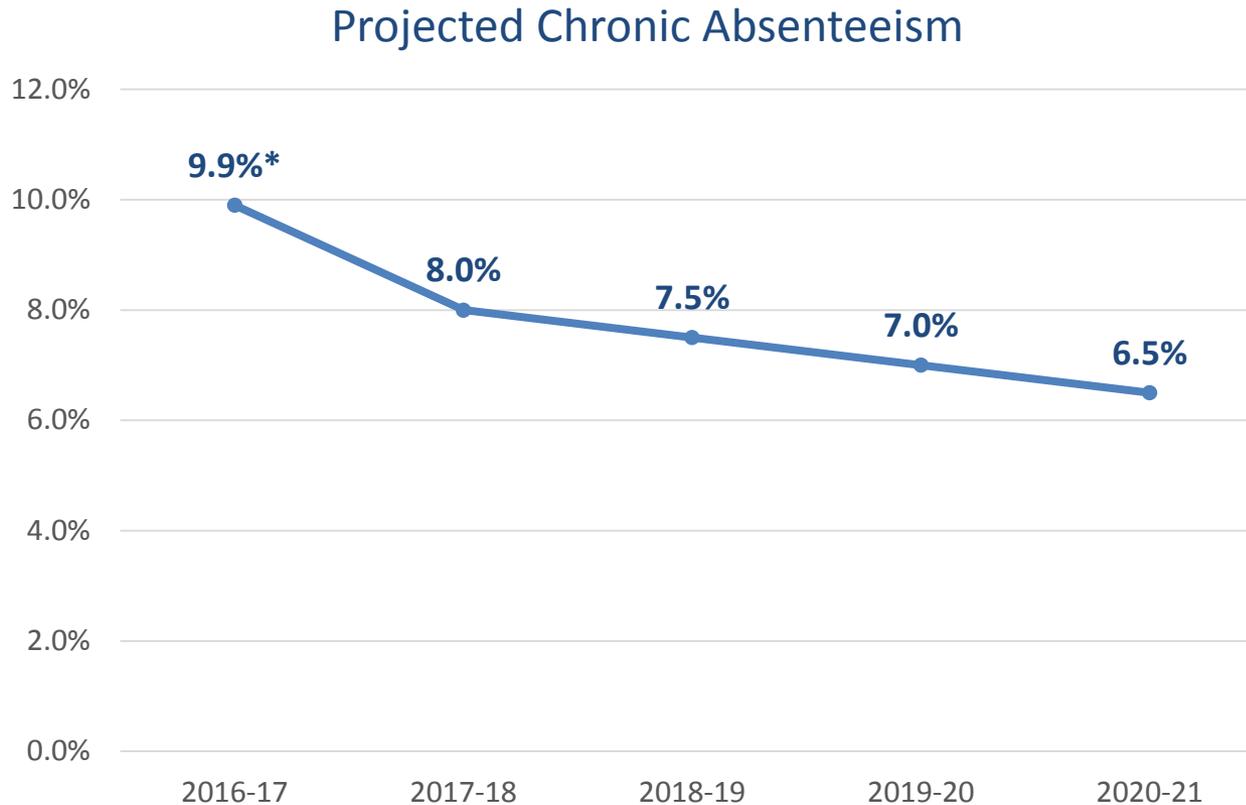


# Strategy 2 Primary Activities

1. Develop and implement state-level tiered intervention **models to reduce chronic absenteeism.**
2. Develop and implement a state-level **tiered intervention model** with a focus on adult actions and equity to reduce suspensions and expulsions.
3. **Expand partnerships, identify school and community-based supports and provide professional learning** for meeting the behavioral and physical health needs of students and the development of positive and supportive school environments.
4. Develop **trauma-informed practice guidelines** for districts and collaborate with stakeholders and experts to coordinate and deliver a systematic and sequential series of professional learning.



# Strategy 2 Goals and Targets: Chronic Absenteeism

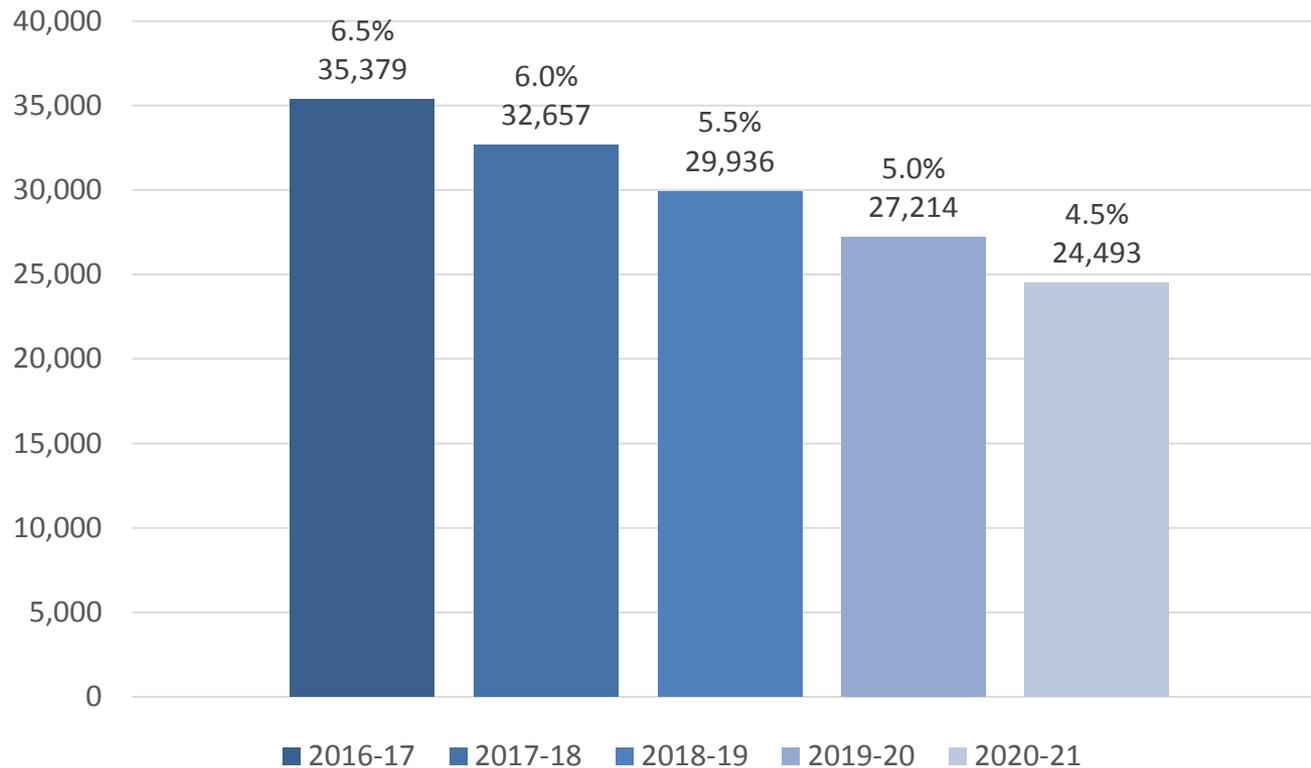


\*Actual data. Note: 2016-17 Chronic absence data reflects ISS absence rule.



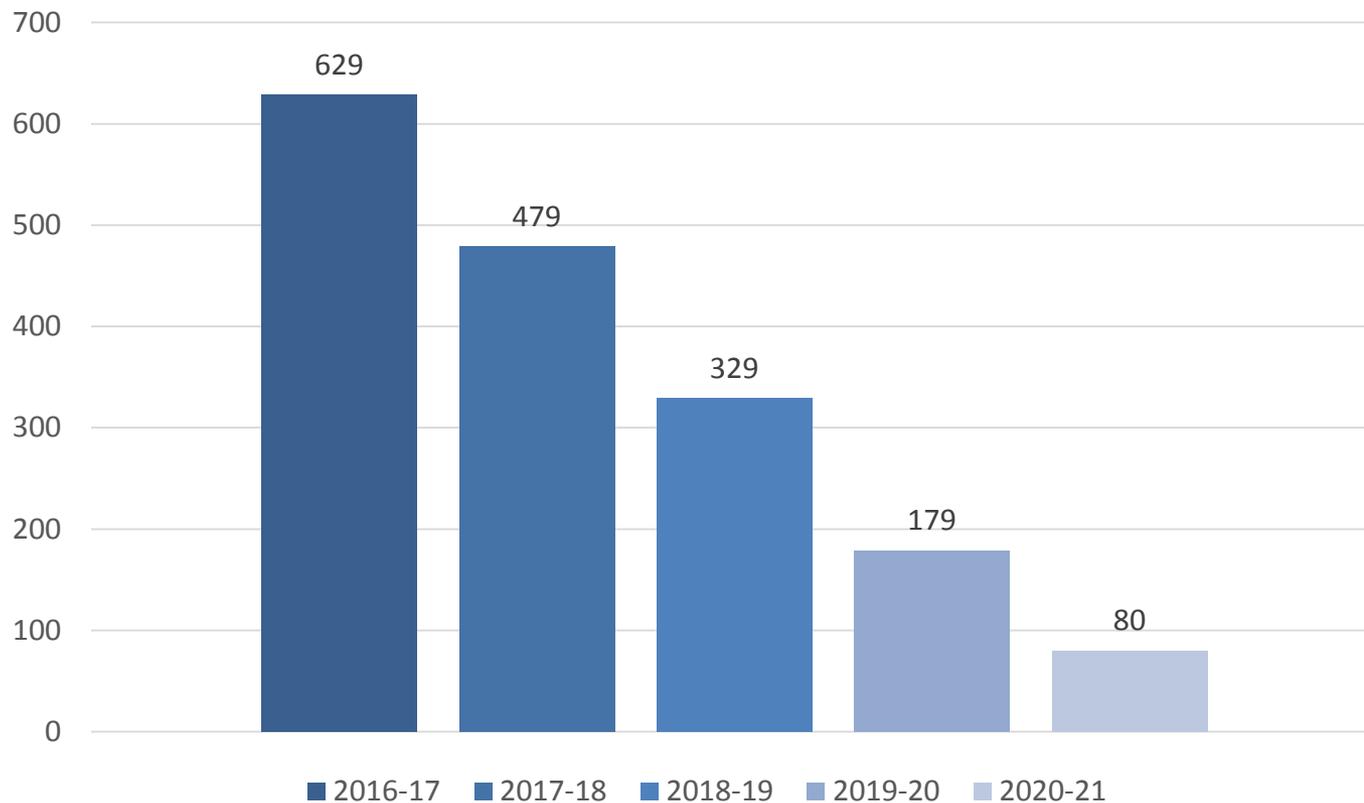
# Strategy 2 Goals and Targets: Exclusionary Discipline

Projected Exclusionary Discipline for All Students



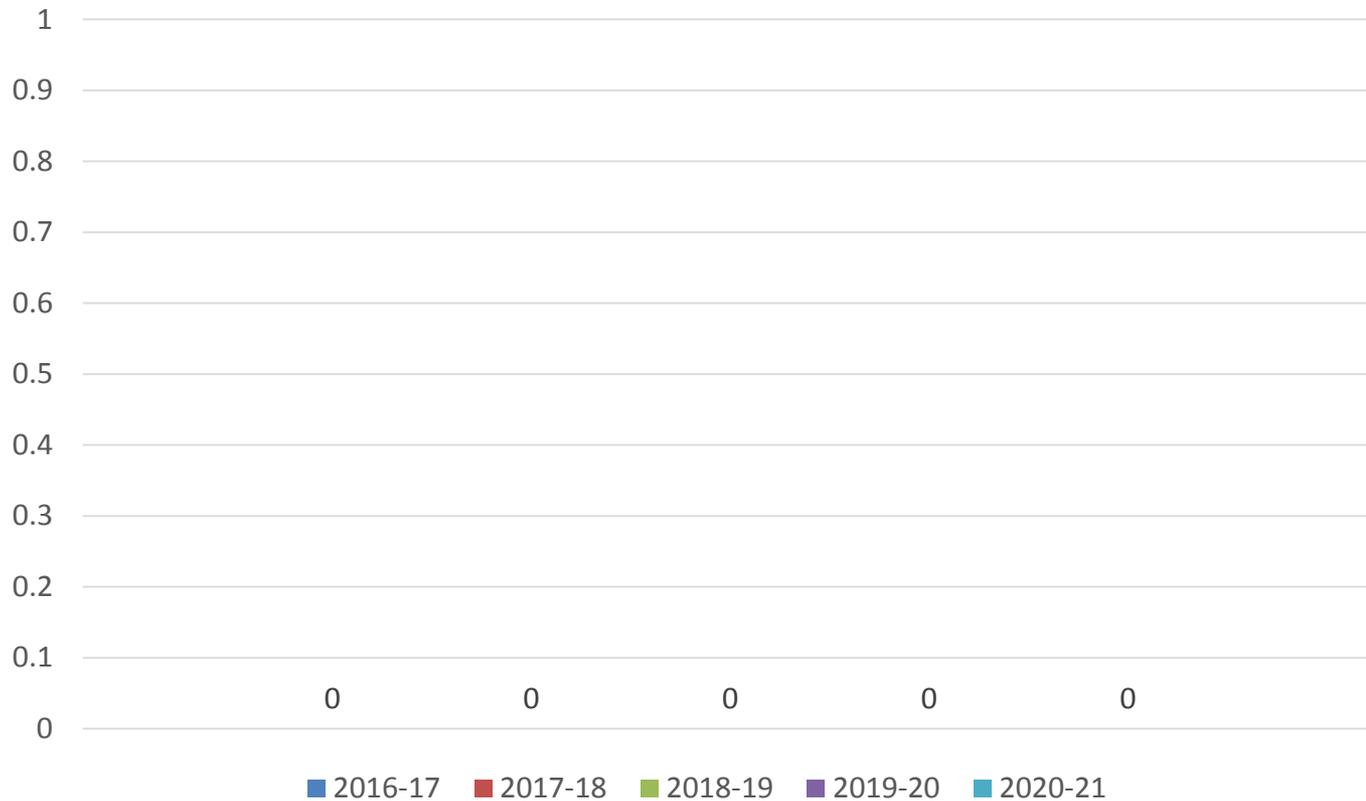
# Strategy 2 Goals and Targets: Exclusionary Discipline

Projected Exclusionary Discipline in Grades K-2



# Strategy 2 Goals and Targets: Exclusionary Discipline

Projected Exclusionary Discipline in Pre-K



## **Strategy 3:**

**Support student academic achievement and school improvement through effective school, family and community partnerships.**



# Strategy 3 Primary Activities

- Continue the **Commissioner's Roundtable on Family and Community Engagement**.
- Continue the **Friday Community and Family Engagement (CAFE)** series.
- Convene an additional series of monthly meetings with **Opportunity Districts**.
- **Develop educators' capacity** to lead family and community engagement efforts through training related to high-impact practices.
- **Survey school staff and families** with the Welcoming Schools Tool in Opportunity Districts.



# Strategy 3 Goals and Targets

- By June 2021 increase the scores on the Welcoming Schools Tool for parents and staff in Opportunity Districts by 40%.
- Interim goals will be to improve the scores by 10% each year over the baseline established in January 2018.

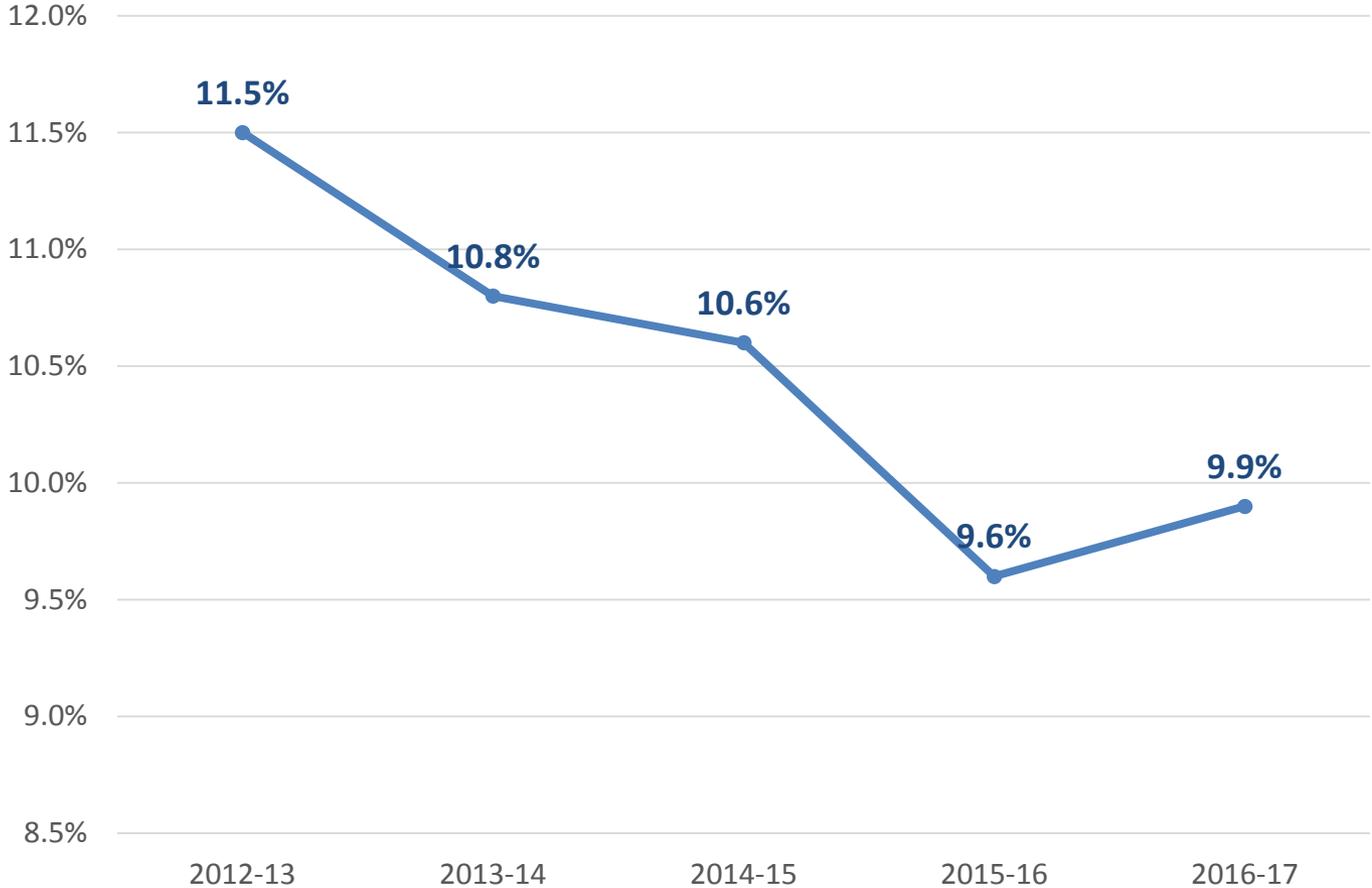


# Evidence of Progress

- **Strategy 1:** Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings
- **Strategy 2:** Next Generation Student Supports
- **Strategy 3:** Effective school, family and community partnerships



# Five-year Chronic Absenteeism Trend



# Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow 2017-18 Campaign

A photograph of five diverse young adults in graduation caps and gowns, smiling and posing together. The photo is set against a blue sky with light clouds. A yellow banner with the text "ATTEND TODAY, ACHIEVE TOMORROW" is overlaid on the bottom of the photo. Below the banner is a yellow pencil graphic.

**ATTEND TODAY, ACHIEVE TOMORROW**

[www.attendtodayCT.org](http://www.attendtodayCT.org)  
[#attendtodayCT](https://twitter.com/attendtodayCT)



# Year-long Attendance Awareness Campaign

The *Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow* campaign kicked off in September – National Attendance Awareness Month.

It provides districts, schools and community partners with resources and artwork with the *Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow* slogan and design work, including:

- Webpage, [www.attendtodayct.org](http://www.attendtodayct.org) and hashtag #achievetodayct;
- Printable and downloadable resources, including social media graphics, banners, badges; and
- Handouts for parents and others, in English and Spanish.



# Goal 1 Q&A



**Thank you!**