



NEWS

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DR. DIANNA R. WENTZELL, COMMISSIONER

For Immediate Release:

March 2, 2016

Contact: Abbe Smith 860.713.6525

CONNECTICUT LAUNCHES NEXT GENERATION ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM DESIGNED TO PROVIDE MORE HOLISTIC PICTURE OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

(HARTFORD, CT) – Commissioner of Education Dianna R. Wentzell on Wednesday announced the launch of Connecticut’s Next Generation Accountability System, a new, broader set of performance measures, called indicators, designed to give a more comprehensive and holistic picture of how schools and students are performing.

“Our new accountability system will tell a deeper, truer story of how well a school is preparing its students for success in college, career and life,” said Commissioner Wentzell. “The new system moves beyond test scores and graduation rates to provide a more holistic, multifactor perspective of district and school performance. It also shows where we need to invest more time and resources to help kids in the greatest need and where we can celebrate and share school success stories.”

The State Department of Education also released lists of schools identified as “Schools of Distinction,” schools where high-needs student populations outperformed the district and state average, schools that are exiting “Turnaround or Focus” status, and schools that will be targeted for greater intervention and support.

The Next Generation Accountability System is designed to help Connecticut measure school and district success toward the goal of providing every student a quality education that prepares him or her for success down the road. Each school receives a score calculated using a formula that incorporates the accountability system indicators.

The identification of Focus and Turnaround schools is required under Connecticut’s ESEA flexibility waiver and comes with a tiered set of supports and interventions, including support through the Alliance District program, Commissioner’s Network and other programs.

Connecticut also identified “Schools of Distinction,” which are schools that fall into the top 10 percent of schools using the Accountability Index score, or the top 10 percent of schools that demonstrated high achievement among high-needs subgroups (Free or Reduced Price Lunch, English language learners and students with special education needs.) To qualify for distinction, a school cannot have

high achievement gaps or high graduation rate gaps; it must also meet the participation rate requirements on the state summative assessment.

A key feature of the new accountability system is that it separates out data for high-needs subgroups of students. That will give us a better idea of how students living in poverty, students who have disabilities and students learning English are performing in school and how we can better support them on the path to success.

The state also released a list of schools originally identified in 2012 as Turnaround or Focus that are now exiting those categories due to improved student performance.

There are two main enhancements with this new accountability system. First, in addition to measuring academic achievement, the new system also focuses on student growth over time. Measuring growth provides a more accurate picture than just looking at a snapshot in time of student performance. Growth will be incorporated into the system starting with the 2015-16 results. The second big change is that the new accountability system includes additional key indicators, such as chronic absenteeism, physical fitness and arts access. Research tells us that students who attend school on a daily basis and maintain a healthy lifestyle are more likely to graduate and succeed in college. Access to an engaging arts curriculum creates a more well-rounded educational experience.

The Next Generation Accountability System also strengthens transparency around performance in that schools will receive a report that provides a picture of how the school measures up on all 12 of the indicators. The data will be easily searchable and will provide a more comprehensive, holistic picture of student and school performance.

For two years, the Connecticut State Department of Education actively sought feedback regarding the accountability system from district and school leaders, Connecticut educators, state and national experts, CSDE staff, and many others. The “next generation” system is a direct result of this extensive consultation process.

Connecticut’s Next Generation Accountability System results can be found online at:
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2683&Q=334346>.

What are the 12 Next Generation Accountability System indicators?

1. Academic achievement status measured by state assessments
2. Academic growth
3. Assessment participation rate
4. Chronic absenteeism
5. Preparation for post-secondary and career readiness – coursework
6. Preparation for postsecondary and career readiness – exams
7. Graduation – on track in 9th grade
8. Graduation – four year adjusted cohort graduation rate – all students
9. Graduation – six year adjusted cohort graduation rate – high needs
10. Postsecondary entrance rate – all students (college enrollment)
11. Physical fitness
12. Arts access

###

CONTACT: Abbe Smith, Director of Communications
Connecticut State Department of Education
Phone: 860-713-6525
Mobile: 860-381-7096
Email: Abbe.Smith@ct.gov