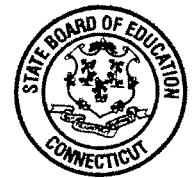


# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Bureau of Accountability and Improvement



## Spring 2011 District Improvement Plan Monitoring Report

District: Norwalk Public Schools  
Date: June 17, 2011  
Reviewer: Adrian Wood, Education Consultant

### Overview

This past spring, the technical assistance team from the Bureau of Accountability and Improvement at the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) assigned to your district conducted a monitoring visit with your district's leadership team. The purpose of this visit was to receive an update on the status of all adult actions and interim student benchmark indicators identified in your district's improvement plan, as well as an update on the status of your district's three-tiered accountability system (instructional, school and district level data teams). The following report documents the findings from that visit as well as summarizes the results of your district's Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) for 2011.

Put together, this information will be used to inform recommendations for steps as your district develops and implements a new three-year district improvement plan. Findings from this monitoring report will also be used to make determinations about the level of involvement of the technical assistance team in your district over the next year.

### I. Introduction

- **How has the district responded to the recommendations from the previous monitoring visit?**
  - Five recommendations were made in the last monitoring report: (1) Determine how to use the data to measure progress and continue implementation of Tier II strategies; (2) Continue providing professional development focused on building capacity to implement the District Improvement Plan and School Improvement Plan with fidelity; (3) Additional work with those schools which are not as current with their school and instructional data teams; (4) Implement walkthroughs; and (5) More targeted assistance at the school level based on need. Each recommendation was satisfactorily achieved. The district needs to continue monitoring and supporting the implementation of these recommendations.
- **Have there been any unexpected impacts upon the implementation of the plan?**
  - There have been no unexpected implications that have affected the implementation of the plan.

## II. What is the status of the district's three-tiered accountability system?

### District Data Team (DDT)

- **Has the DDT met each standard on the CSDE Standards for District Data Teams?**
  - During a Data Driven Decision Making Data Team (DDDMT) meeting, Norwalk's DDDMT collaborated with the CSDE technical assistance team in assessing the Executive Data Team (EDT) structure and procedures relative to the "Standards for District Data Teams" protocol. All the standards were met.
- **If all standards have not been met, what strategies are planned to enable the DDT to meet those standards?**
  - Although all the standards have been met, the district will continue to work on improving their performance in each of the standards.

### School Data Teams

- **To what extent has the DDT established a process/structure to monitor the development, implementation and effectiveness of School Data Teams and to ensure their alignment with the District Improvement Plan?**
  - The DDDMT has done an exemplary job of monitoring and supporting school data teams. They have provided opportunities for staff training on how to analyze and interpret test results, setting aside time for instructional and administrative teams to meet and discuss data, and established process and procedures for assessing relevant data. Members of the DDDMT periodically visit school data teams to ensure data are being used to inform instructional improvement decisions directed at improving student outcomes. Their visits are also to ensure that the School Growth Plan (SGP) remained aligned with the District Improvement Plan while still providing each school with the opportunity to create their own set of Tier I and Tier II actions.
- **Are School Data Teams functioning in all schools in the district?**
  - Evidence presented during the monitoring visit and DDDMT meetings indicate that all schools have functioning school data teams.
- **Does the district have a dedicated time for School Data Teams to meet?**
  - Evidence presented during the monitoring visit and DDDMT meetings indicate that all school data teams have regularly scheduled meetings.
- **What evidence is collected by the DDT to monitor the work of the School Data Teams?**
  - The DDDMT periodically meets to review implementation of School District Improvement Plan to ensure that it remains aligned to the District Improvement Plan and to review action steps, agenda and minutes.

- **How many School Data Teams have met all standards on the *CSDE Standards for School Data Teams*?**
  - While many of the schools met the majority of the standards, all schools need to continue to refine their practices and improve. However every school is proficient in some areas. All schools are continuing to work on their performance in each of the standards.
- **What strategies are planned to assist the School Data Teams in meeting all standards?**
  - The DDDMT will continue providing professional development to all School Data Teams through Connecticut's Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) to assist them with their efforts to reach CSDE "Gold Standards" for School Data Team work.

### **Instructional Data Teams**

- **What evidence do School Data Teams collect on the frequency and effectiveness Instructional (Grade Level or Content Area) Data Team meetings?**
  - School Data Teams have made significant progress in monitoring and supporting instructional data team (IDT). Time is set aside during their meetings to review and discuss data from IDTs meetings.

### **III. What is the status of the district's fulfillment of its results indicators to this point?**

- **What is the evidence that the adult actions (strategies) identified in the District Improvement Plan have been implemented with fidelity?**

#### Goal 1: Literacy

1. Implement comprehensive Literacy Approach and Content-Area Reading Strategies
  - Committees have been formed to articulate best practices in balanced literacy and reading instruction. The committee will produce a document in the winter 2012. All K-5 teachers to use to guide implementation of best practices in daily instruction. About 100 teachers in Tier 3 secondary schools have been provided with professional development and job-embedded coaching in research-based content-area reading strategies. All faculty and administrators at Tier 3 secondary schools were trained in content-area reading strategies. Each school selected one schoolwide reading strategy and will implement this reading strategy across all content areas.
2. Apply Reeves "Making Standards Work" to language arts program
  - The Grades K-5 and 6-8 English Language Arts (ELA) steering committee developed pacing guides for all K-8 ELA teachers to use to guide ELA instruction beginning next school year.
3. Implement systemwide series of district benchmark assessments
  - All teachers have administered Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) 2 or Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) testing and tiered their students' instruction through the IDT process. Literary Specialists and Subject Area Leaders ensure that appropriate instructional strategies are implemented.

4. Monitor core instruction and implement differentiated instruction to students indemnified through district data systems
  - All teachers are trained in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and are using SOIP strategies in their classroom. The teachers are also sharing these strategies with their colleagues.

Goal 2: Numeracy

1. Apply Reeves “Making Standards Work” principles to mathematics program
  - All Norwalk math materials and programs are aligned to the Connecticut Framework and Grade Level Expectations.
  - Pacing guides have been created and are aligned to Connecticut Benchmark Assessments.
  - Math specific vocabulary lists have been created and taught at each grade level.
2. Implement a standard-based mathematics program in each of the elementary schools
  - Created and executed “Implementation Plan” for new curricula, pacing guides and vocabulary at all schools (K-8).
  - Created model/sample Common Formative Assessments for all curricular units (K-8).
  - Staff at Tier 3 schools received the following CALI training (Data Team/Data Driven Decision Making, Effective Teaching Strategies, Common Formative Assessments and Differentiated Instruction).
3. Develop and implement districtwide benchmark assessments
  - Some benchmarks assessments have been created. These various assessments have administered.

Goal 3: Family Community Partnership

1. All welcoming walkthroughs are completed.
2. A district process is being completed to organize parent and community recommendations from all schools. This process will provide common practices for better communication amongst the community, schools and the district.

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- **What is the evidence of the impact of those identified strategies on adult practices?**
    - In reference to Goal 1, the district is continuing its implementation of some comprehensive Literacy Approach and Content Area Reading Strategies. Although this task is ongoing, work groups have been formed and they have begun drafting a document that includes best practices. Teachers have been informed that a new pacing guide will be used during the upcoming school year. Literacy specialists and subject area leaders are monitoring teachers to ensure that the appropriate instructional strategies are being implemented.
    - In reference to Goal 2, the district is continuing its implementation of a standards-based mathematics program in each of the elementary schools. The plan has been created and distributed throughout the district. The plan is also available on the district Web site. The Common Formative Assessments (CFA) has been created and some schools and teachers were able to modify the district’s CFAs or create their own. These assessments have been administered and the results are being used to inform teaching and learning.

- In reference to Goal 3, the district completed all welcoming walkthroughs. An online survey for parent feedback about school culture was developed. The results of the survey are expected by the end of the summer.
- **What is the evidence of the impact of those identified strategies on student outcomes?**
  - Data that looks at change in percent of students at or above proficiency by grade in three content areas (reading, math, and writing) from 2008 to 2010 is presented in the following tables. Data reflecting change in the achievement gap among subgroups are also presented. Based on these data, indicators of progress and some areas of concern are noted below.
  - Table 1 shows the average change in the percent of students on the reading section of the CMT and CAPT at the proficiency level, over three years across subgroups showed positive gains. Hispanic, black and special education free/reduced meals students showed the largest gains in the percent of students performing at or above proficiency in reading on the CMT.
  - Table 2 illustrates the gains in closing the achievement gap between comparison subgroups. Consistent gains were made across all comparison subgroups in Grades 3, 6 and 7. The data also shows that the gap between black vs. white and Hispanic vs. white students continues to decrease for all grades except Grade 10.
  - Table 3 illustrates the average change in the percent of students on the math section of the CMT and CAPT at the proficiency level, over three years across subgroups showed positive gains. Hispanic, black and special education free/reduced meals students showed the largest gains in the percent of students performing at or above proficiency in math on the CMT.
  - Table 4 illustrates the gains in closing the achievement gap between comparison subgroups. In Grades 3 through 8 gains were made across all comparison subgroups except English Language Learners (ELLs) vs. Non-ELLs. The data also shows the gap between Hispanic and white students decreased in Grade 10.
- **What is the status of the district's progress towards achieving the Tier I Student Outcome goals identified in the District Improvement Plan?**
  - The district continues to make significant progress toward achieving these goals.

(Note: In some cases, comparisons between and within subgroups (e.g., special education, non-special education, Free/reduced lunch eligible, non-free/reduced lunch eligible, English language learners and non-English language learners) are not reliable due to the small number of students within these groups at the grade level. If this is the case, comparisons are reported in the tables below for informational purposes only and will not be interpreted in this report.)

Table 1.

2008-2011 Change in Percent At/Above Proficiency by Grade Level and Sub-group READING											
District Name	Grade	Whole Pop.	Black	White	Hisp.	Special Ed.	Not Spec. Ed.	ELL	Non-ELL	F/R Meals	Full Price Meals
Norwalk	3	6.1	5.2	4.5	11.1	14.4	5.0	13.7	5.5	16.4	3.8
Norwalk	4	9.0	13.6	4.5	13.2	6.3	6.7	0.4	8.5	11.8	10.5
Norwalk	5	5.5	6.6	3.1	9.5	2.8	2.7	-20.1	6.1	7.7	8.6
Norwalk	6	18.7	29.7	11.5	22.9	13.7	15.4	20.1	17.1	29.8	13.5
Norwalk	7	9.9	15.4	1.8	15.5	13.9	8.4	10.8	7.7	13.7	9.7
Norwalk	8	3.0	0.7	-1.0	7.5	5.8	0.6	-9.6	3.1	8.4	2.2
Norwalk	CMT Average Change	8.7	11.9	4.1	13.3	9.5	6.5	2.6	8.0	14.6	8.1
Norwalk	10	-3.9	-9.4	1.0	-6.1	-0.5	-4.9	-11.2	-2.7	-4.5	-1.4

Table 2.

Comparison of 2008 and 2011 Gap in Percent of Students At/Above Proficiency by Sub-group READING							
DISTRICT NAME	Grade	Year	Black vs. White	Hisp. vs. White	F/R vs. Non-F/R	Spec. Ed. vs. Non-Spec.Ed.	ELL vs. Non-ELL
Norwalk	3	2008	-33.4	-25.7	-34	-56.4	-36.6
Norwalk		2011	-32.7	-19.1	-21.4	-47	-28.4
Norwalk		CHANGE	0.7	6.6	12.6	9.4	8.2
Norwalk	4	2008	-39	-23.9	-26.9	-52.3	-45.9
Norwalk		2011	-29.9	-15.2	-25.6	-52.7	-54
Norwalk		CHANGE	9.1	8.7	1.3	-0.4	-8.1
Norwalk	5	2008	-36	-22.5	-25.5	-58	-37.2
Norwalk		2011	-32.5	-16.1	-26.4	-57.9	-63.4
Norwalk		CHANGE	3.5	6.4	-0.9	0.1	-26.2
Norwalk	6	2008	-39.1	-24.7	-27.6	-44.3	-47.7
Norwalk		2011	-20.9	-13.3	-11.3	-46	-44.7
Norwalk		CHANGE	18.2	11.4	16.3	-1.7	3
Norwalk	7	2008	-34.4	-25.6	-23.4	-47.6	-57
Norwalk		2011	-20.8	-11.9	-19.4	-42.1	-53.9
Norwalk		CHANGE	13.6	13.7	4	5.5	3.1
Norwalk	8	2008	-29.7	-28.7	-24.4	-55.7	-51.7
Norwalk		2011	-28	-20.2	-18.2	-50.5	-64.4
Norwalk		CHANGE	1.7	8.5	6.2	5.2	-12.7
Norwalk	10	2008	-26.3	-12.4	-14.9	-51.1	-37.9
Norwalk		2011	-36.7	-19.5	-18	-46.7	-46.4
Norwalk		CHANGE	-10.4	-7.1	-3.1	4.4	-8.5

Table 3.

2008-2011 Change in Percent At/Above Proficiency by Grade Level and Sub-group MATH											
District Name	Grade	Whole Pop.	Black	White	Hisp.	Special Ed.	Not Spec. Ed.	ELL	Non-ELL	F/R Meals	Full Price Meals
Norwalk	3	3.3	7.8	0.4	4.6	25.7	0.9	5.6	3.2	8.9	3
Norwalk	4	6.8	13.2	3.5	7.2	5	5	-5.2	7.8	9.9	6.6
Norwalk	5	10	13	8.2	12.2	37.7	5	-5.9	10.7	13.6	10.4
Norwalk	6	14	22	10.5	16.5	13.2	10.8	10.1	13.1	21.4	10.9
Norwalk	7	8.3	8.5	4.1	11.9	15.5	7	24.2	5.6	13.6	7.4
Norwalk	8	3.5	1.8	1	5.7	13.3	0.5	-10.4	3.9	9.3	2.1
Norwalk	CMT Average Change	7.7	11.1	4.6	9.7	18.4	4.9	3.1	7.4	12.8	6.7
Norwalk	10	-2.4	-8.6	-3.4	3.6	-15.8	-1.5	-13.2	-0.8	-1.8	0.2

Table 4.

Comparison of 2008 and 2011 Gap in Percent of Students At/Above Proficiency by Sub-group MATH							
DISTRICT NAME	Grade	Year	Black vs. White	Hisp. vs. White	F/R vs. Non-F/R	Spec. Ed. vs. Non- Spec.Ed.	ELL vs. Non-ELL
Norwalk	3	2008	-32.3	-15.4	-22.4	-57.8	-13.1
Norwalk		2011	-24.9	-11.2	-16.5	-33	-10.7
Norwalk		CHANGE	7.4	4.2	5.9	24.8	2.4
Norwalk	4	2008	-31.1	-12.3	-16.6	-47	-13.3
Norwalk		2011	-21.4	-8.6	-13.3	-47	-26.3
Norwalk		CHANGE	9.7	3.7	3.3	0	-13
Norwalk	5	2008	-30.6	-12.1	-17.4	-66.9	-15.7
Norwalk		2011	-25.8	-8.1	-14.2	-34.2	-32.3
Norwalk		CHANGE	4.8	4	3.2	32.7	-16.6
Norwalk	6	2008	-34.7	-19.3	-21.8	-39.5	-37.9
Norwalk		2011	-23.2	-13.3	-11.3	-37.1	-40.9
Norwalk		CHANGE	11.5	6	10.5	2.4	-3
Norwalk	7	2008	-27.2	-18.2	-24.4	-45.6	-46.9
Norwalk		2011	-22.8	-10.4	-18.2	-37.1	-28.3
Norwalk		CHANGE	4.4	7.8	6.2	8.5	18.6
Norwalk	8	2008	-26.4	-18.8	-21.2	-56	-29.7
Norwalk		2011	-25.6	-14.1	-14	-43.2	-44
Norwalk		CHANGE	0.8	4.7	7.2	12.8	-14.3
Norwalk	10	2008	-34.6	-23.4	-18.2	-37.2	-30.3
Norwalk		2011	-39.8	-16.4	-20.2	-51.5	-42.7
Norwalk		CHANGE	-5.2	7	-2	-14.3	-12.4

#### IV. Commendations and Recommendations

##### ▪ Commendations

1. The Norwalk Public School District Improvement Plan continues to be implemented with fidelity that has resulted in continued progress as shown on the CMT and CAPT. This progress can be attributed to the hard work of the dedicated members of the DDDMT and district staff.
2. The DDDMT continues to work in collaboration with school system leaders and their staff to maintain a districtwide culture of inquiry that values the use of data for sound decision making.
3. The Norwalk Public School District has developed an effective tiered support system to support schools within the district. The supports that are provided to each school is customized based on the needs of the school.
4. The district has successfully implemented their benchmark assessment system including its reporting process to distribute data back to the building level.

▪ **Recommendations**


1. Continue professional development focused on building capacity to implement the District Improvement Plan and School Improvement Plan with fidelity.
2. Continue working with those schools whose school and instructional data teams are still developing.
3. Continue targeted assistance at the school level based on need.
4. Continue using School Data Team/IDT standards to support professional learning teams that take responsibility collectively for improving instructional practices to achieve gains in learning for all their students.
5. The building administrative team must continue using the School Data Team/IDT standards to measure the effectiveness of the School Data Team/IDT.

Finally, the Connecticut State Department of Education technical assistance team would like to commend Norwalk Public School District for its commitment to improving teaching and learning. We look forward to our continued partnership.

Sincerely,

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Dr. Susan Marks  
Superintendent of Schools  
Norwalk Public Schools



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Lol Fearon  
Bureau Chief  
Bureau of Accountability and Improvement