

# State of the Schools

Report on the Progress and Challenges of  
Hartford's Education Reform

October 14, 2009

---

**HARTFORD** Public Schools 

CHOOSE. ACHIEVE. SUCCEED.

# Vision

From a bureaucratic, dysfunctional, low performing school system to...

...a system of high performing, distinctive schools of choice. The attainment of Hartford students in reading, math, science and college readiness will be reflective of the high educational outcomes of the State of Connecticut.

# Hartford's Context

- In the second wealthiest state in the U.S.\*
- The second poorest city per capita in the country\*
- With the greatest achievement gap of all 50 states\*\*

\* *2000 Census*

\*\* *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)*

# Two Pillars of Reform

---

## Hartford's Education Reform



Managed Performance  
Empowerment  
Theory of Action

An “All Choice”  
System of Schools

# Managed Performance Empowerment Theory of Action

---

- The District defines its relationship with each school on the basis of the school's performance.
- High-performing and/or significantly improving schools are given considerable autonomy and freedom from bureaucratic operating constraints.
- Chronically low-performing schools that fail to improve are subject to District intervention, redesign, closure or replacement with higher-performing school models.

# An “All Choice” System of Schools

- More good schools for parents to choose from.
- A combination of inter and intra-district choices.
- Simple, transparent preferences.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> preference within neighborhood
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> preference within zone
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> preference within City

# Hartford's System of Schools Culture Change

---

From a culture of low  
expectations



to a culture of high  
standards

From an advocacy  
culture



to an empowerment  
culture

From an entitlement  
culture



to a performance  
culture

# 2008 - 09 Progress



# Student Achievement Highlights

- Student achievement significantly increased for the second year in a row.
- Lowest performing schools improved significantly.
- Eight of nine achievement gap-closing performance targets were met.
- Every grade level went up in reading for the first time.
- The cohort graduation rate rose from 37% to 42%.
- Dwight Elementary became the first non-magnet school to advance to “Goal Range,” Connecticut’s highest achievement category. Dwight also has the highest 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading scores in the district.

## *Highlights - continued*

- The University High School of Science and Engineering partnership with the University of Hartford became the highest performing high school in the City.
- Kinsella Magnet School of Performing Arts scored double-digit gains for the second year in a row.
- Parkville Elementary, with one of the largest number of English Language Learners, placed second in 3rd grade reading and first in 5th grade writing.
- A total of 28 schools made significant improvements. Thirteen of them raised their overall school achievement index by more than 3 percent.
- Greatest CMT gains of any Connecticut City for second consecutive year.

# 2008-2009 DISTRICT PERFORMANCE TARGETS & RESULTS

MEASURE	2007-2008 ACTUAL	2008-2009 TARGET	2008-2009 ACTUAL	CHANGE	MET TARGET
3 <sup>RD</sup> GRADE READING	33.5%	37.3%	37.7%	4.2%	✓
4 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE MATHEMATICS	50.0%	50.0% +	53.9%	3.9%	✓
5 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE WRITING	58.8%	64.8%	65.9%	7.1%	✓
7 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE MATHEMATICS	52.6%	52.6% +	60.1%	7.5%	✓
8 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE SCIENCE	32.3%	35.3%	38.3%	6.0%	✓
10 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE CAPT READING WRITING	52.2% 65.9%	57.8% 65.9% +	52.6% 61.8%	0.4% -4.1%	
SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED SCHOOLS (NET)	11 SCHOOLS	+ 2 SCHOOLS	7 SCHOOLS	+ 4 SCHOOLS	✓
GRADUATE COHORT 4 / 5 YEAR	36% 43%	37% 43%+	42% 43%	5% 0%	✓ ✓
CLIMATE/SATISFACTION SURVEY RESPONSE RATE SATISFACTION RATE	18% 65%	22% 69%	26% 79%	8% 14%	✓ ✓

' + ' indicates that the Actual value exceeded the Target value.

# 2009 CMT/CAPT - District Overview

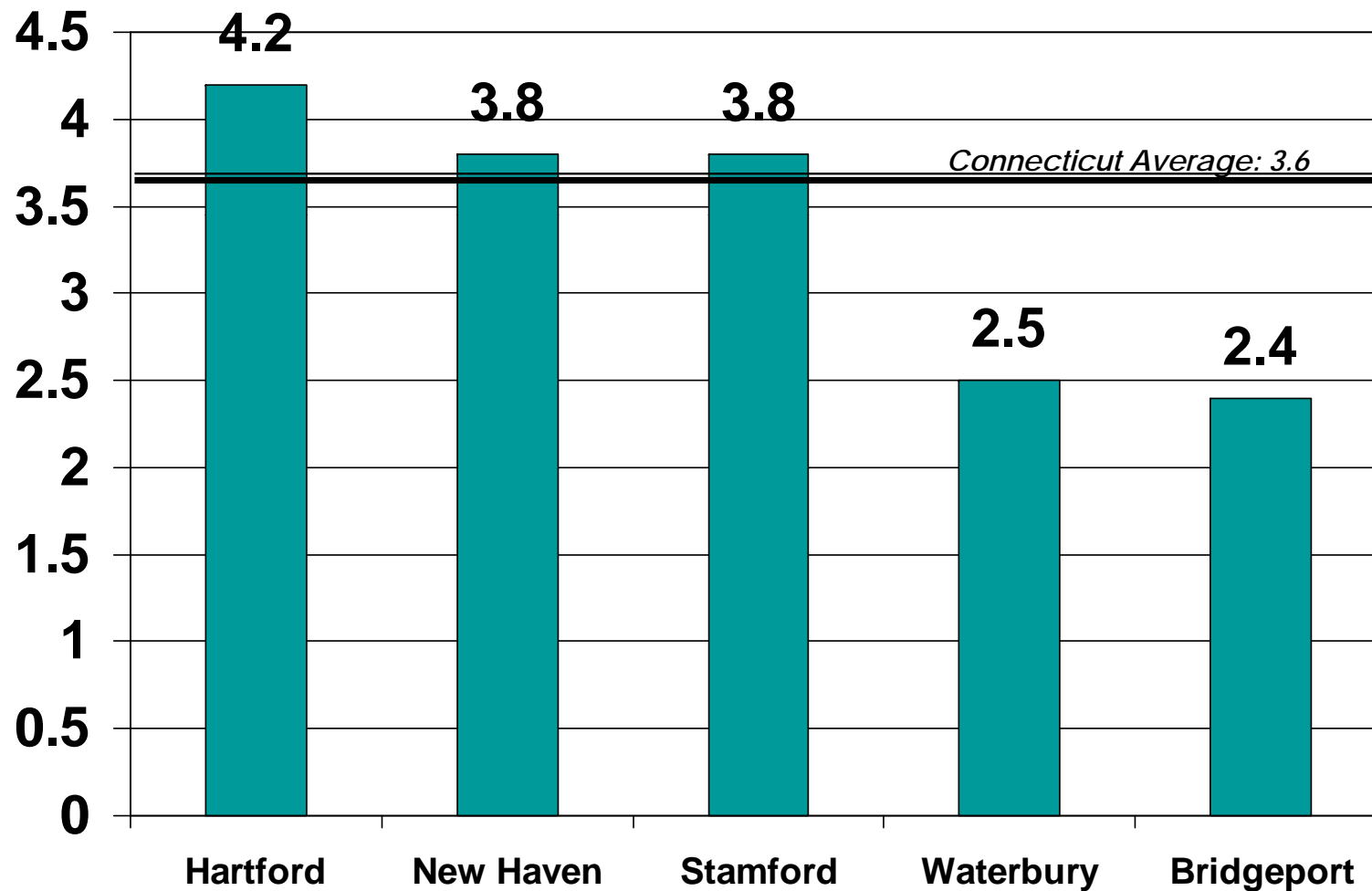
## Reading Grades 3 - 10 Results

Grade	Year	READING			
		At/Above Goal (%)	Change At/Above Goal (%) 2008-2009	At/Above Proficient (%)	Change At/Above Proficient (%) 2008-2009
3	2009	18.2	1.8	37.7	4.2
	2008	16.4		33.5	
	2007	13.1		30.3	
4	2009	21.2	4.4	36.8	4.2
	2008	16.8		32.6	
	2007	14.1		28.3	
5	2009	23.7	1.6	40.5	3.8
	2008	22.1		36.7	
	2007	19.5		33.0	
6	2009	35.2	2.9	50.8	2.9
	2008	32.3		47.9	
	2007	29.9		44.4	
7	2009	44.9	6.5	58.4	7.1
	2008	38.4		51.3	
	2007	30.2		43.0	
8	2009	34.1	6.3	51.4	6.2
	2008	27.8		45.2	
	2007	31.8		45.4	
10	2009	15.4	4.4	52.6	0.4
	2008	11.0		52.2	
	2007	14.7		49.8	

## Performance Gains on CMT for Five Largest School Districts

(2008 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to 2009 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 2008 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 2009 5<sup>th</sup> grade, etc.)

Average Change in % of Student Cohorts Meeting State Goals on CMT



## Other Important Accomplishments

---

- Four new schools opened in August 2009:
  - America's Choice at SAND
  - High School, Inc. (Insurance and Finance)
  - Journalism and Media High Academy at Weaver
  - OPPortunity High School
- Three schools listed in the U.S. News and World Report's "Best High Schools in America:"
  - Classical Magnet School
  - Sport and Medical Sciences Academy
  - Capital Preparatory Magnet High School

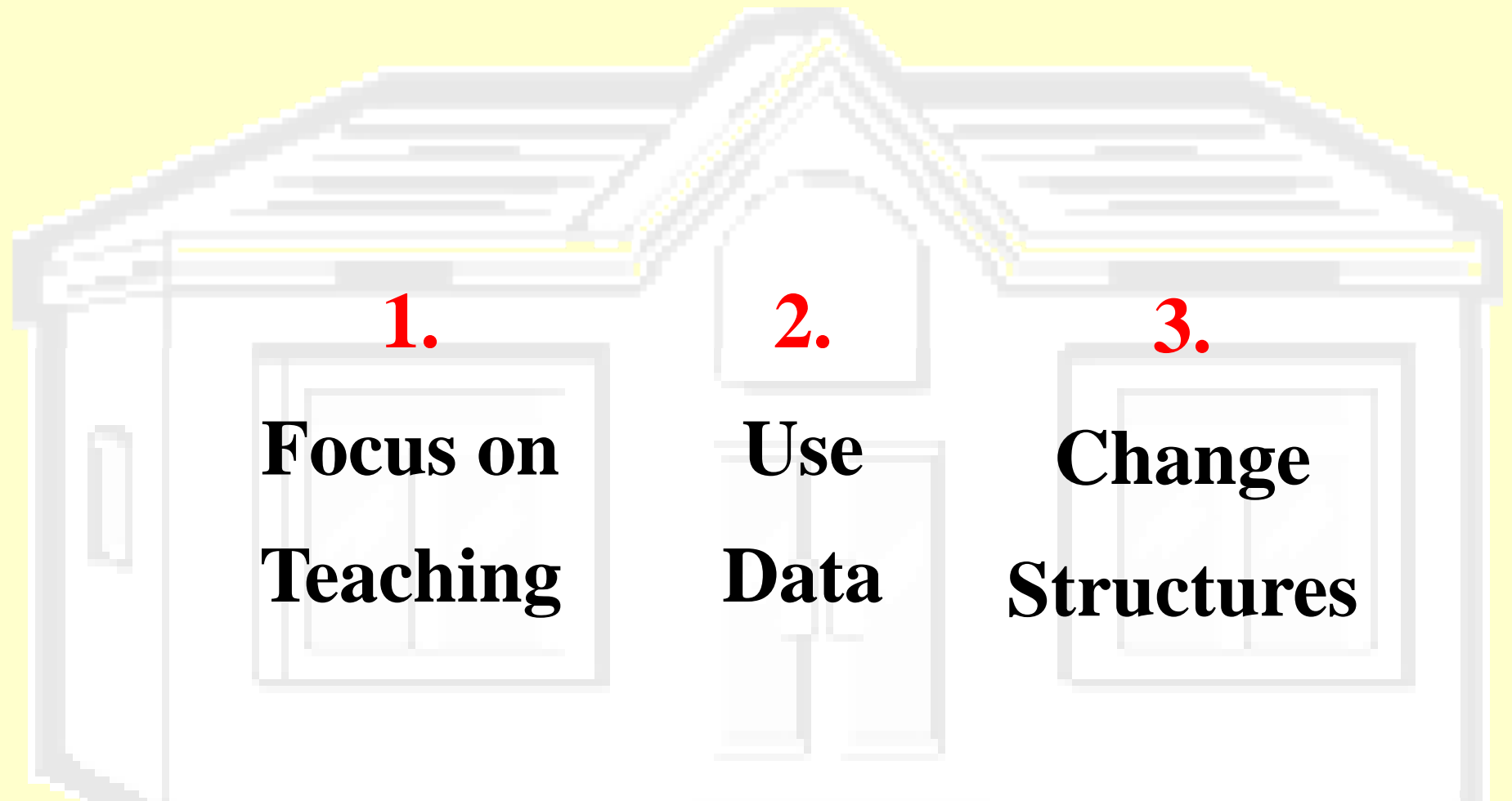
- Three National Academy Foundation (NAF) Schools:
  - Pathways to Technology (*Information Technology*)
  - Engineering and Green Technology High School (*Engineering*)
  - High School, Inc. (Finance)
- Three New, State-of-the-Art School Buildings Completed:
  - Kinsella Magnet School for the Performing Arts
  - University High for Science and Engineering
  - Hartford Montessori
- Accomplished 70%/30% allocation of resources to schools/central services

- Community School partnerships with Hartford Foundation – 5 community school programs under development.
- Increased instructional time for 2009-10 at lowest performing schools by 45 minutes per day.
- Pathways – Goodwin College Partnership.
- Improvement of Special Education and ELL Programs.
- School Governance Councils created for Autonomous Schools.
- K-12 Student Uniform Policy Implemented.
- Developed Strategic Operating Plan (2009-10 to 2011-12).
- Achieve Hartford! (LEF) Organized and Working.



# Three Approaches to Improving Student Achievement

---



# Disappointments in 2008-09

- No progress on Single Gender Education.
- Tenth grade CAPT Scores flat.
- Lack of State and Regional Commitment for Implementation of *Sheff* Racial Quotas.
- Loss of 250 people/positions for 2009-10.
- Reduction of student transportation.
- Inability of State and Hartford City Council to provide adequate financial support.

**2009-2010 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE MATRIX**  
**Based on 2009 Preliminary Results of CMT and CAPT**

		2008 TO 2009 RATE OF IMPROVEMENT				Baseline Year New & Redesigned Schools	New & Redesigned Schools Starting 2009-2010
		Improving > + 3.0	No Significant Change + 3.0 to - 3.0	Declining < - 3.0			
<b>R E L A T I V E  P E R F O R M A N C E</b>	<b>Goal Range: OSI 70+</b>	University High Dwight	Hartford Magnet Middle Classical Capital Preparatory		<b>Autonomous</b>		America's Choice at SAND High School Inc. Journalism & Media High School OPPportunity High School
	<b>High Proficient: OSI 60 to 69</b>	Webster Parkville Kinsella Kennelly	Sport & Medical Sciences Breakthrough Pathways		<b>Defined Autonomy</b>	Achievement First Hartford	
	<b>Proficient: OSI 50 to 59</b>	Wish Fisher Simpson-Waverly M.L. King	Hooker Naylor Rawson West Middle Batchelder			Global Communications/IB	
	<b>Below Proficient: OSI 40 to 49</b>	Moylan Clark	Burr Sanchez McDonough Bellizzi Middle		<b>Intervention</b>	M.D. Fox CommPACT Bulkeley Lower	
	<b>Substantially Below: OSI below 40</b>	Quirk Middle	Betances Fox Middle	Weaver 10-12	<b>Redesign</b>	HPS-Law & Gov't HPS-Nursing Burns Latino Studies HPS-Engineering & Tech Milner Core Knowledge Culinary Arts	

\* School did not host a grade that participated in the 2009 CMT or CAPT

## 2009-2010 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE MATRIX Based on 2009 Results of CMT and CAPT

		2008 TO 2009 RATE OF IMPROVEMENT				Baseline Year New & Redesigned Schools
		Improving ≥ +4.0	Maintaining +3.9 to -3.9	Declining ≤ -4.0		
<b>R E L A T I V E  P E R F O R M A N C E</b>	<b>Goal Range: OSI 70+</b>	University High Dwight	Hartford Magnet Middle Classical Capital Preparatory		<b>Autonomous</b>	
	<b>Proficient: OSI 50 to 69</b>	Parkville Kinsella Kennelly Wish Fisher Simpson-Waverly M.L. King	Sport & Medical Sciences Webster Breakthrough Pathways Hooker Naylor Rawson West Middle Batchelder			Achievement First Hartford Global Communications/IB
	<b>Below Proficient: OSI Below 50</b>	Clark Quirk Middle	Moylan Burr Sanchez McDonough Bellizzi Middle Betances	Weaver 10-12	<b>Intervention / Redesign</b>	M.D. Fox CommPACT Bulkeley Lower HPHS-Law & Gov't HPHS-Nursing Burns Latino Studies HPHS-Engineering & Green Technology Milner Core Knowledge Culinary Arts
						<b>New &amp; Redesigned Schools 2009-2010</b> America's Choice at SAND Breakthrough II High School Inc. Journalism & Media High School Montessori OPPortunity High School

Schools not consisting of a grade that participates in the CMT or CAPT : Bulkeley Upper , HPHS Freshman Academy

# Looking Forward

# 2 1/2 Years Into Hartford's Reform

## What Have We Learned

- We can have high-poverty, high-performing schools.
- It is possible to close the achievement gap.
- Hartford's Schools are on the rise.
- At the current rate of progress, Connecticut's insidious achievement gap can be closed in eight more years.
- Whether or not that happens, depends upon our capacity as a community to sustain Hartford's education reform.
- The level of resources necessary to continue gains in student achievement is unclear.
- The rate of change necessary often outstrips our capacity for communication and consensus.
- Our focus must be on sustainability.
- Every organization is perfectly designed to get the results it is getting. *Peter Drucker*

# A Real Question

Hartford is an ongoing experiment in the answers to the following social research and public policy question:

Can education reform to close the achievement gap be sustained despite spending significantly less money each year?

# Challenges Ahead

- Recessionary Environment

Two more years of flat or lower revenue.

Two more years of significant expenditure reduction.

- A Hyper-competitive Environment

*Sheff v. O'Neil* quotas – Meeting 80% of parental demand for quality.

Choosing Hartford's Schools.

- Adverse Operating Conditions

More instructional time.

Talent retention: Developing and rewarding the best teachers and principals.

School-based seniority.



# Solutions

A financial plan; courage to make tough choices.

Meeting *Sheff* demand; 80% of Hartford parents choosing Hartford schools.

A Sustainable Business Model that creates the operating conditions necessary to continue progress and sustain good schools.

# The Courage and Fortitude to Change our Children's Future

---

- Create more good schools, faster.
- Resist the popular tendency to slow down, change less, and go slower in challenging economic times.
- Be willing to make tough budget choices and priorities; based on our measures, we must do the most important things differently rather than doing more things.
- More help from State and City government and our community.
- Sustain the gains in student achievement, institutionalize the reform.

# What Motivates Us in the Struggle to Close the Achievement Gap?

At the level of the individual student, creating high performing schools is life-saving work. A high performing school is the engine of the American Dream.

At the societal level we save ourselves by creating a better City, State and Nation.

What we do – the actions we take, the decisions we make or choose not to make – will be more determinative of the outcome than any set of external factors that challenge the success of schools.

# What is the State of Our Schools?

- Much stronger, but still fragile.
- Hopeful, despite persistent obstacles and enduring cynics.
- The demonstration of success has made the possibility of sustained success real and attainable despite the significant challenges we face.