Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on July 15, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 3 Primrose Street.

L. Roche, Vice Chair	J. Erardi
K. Hamilton, Secretary	L. Gejda
Debbie Leidlein	R. Bienkowski
K. Alexander	16 Staff
J. Vouros	20 Public
D. Freedman	3 Press
M. Ku	

Item 1 – Call to Order
Mrs. Roche called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

MOTION: Ms. Hamilton moved that the Board of Education go into executive session to discuss safety and security and invite Dr. Erardi, Dr. Gejda, Gino Faiella, Mark Pompano and Tom Kuroski, to discuss a tuition waiver and invite Dr. Erardi and Dr. Gejda, and to interview the candidate for the high school assistant principal position and invite Dr. Erardi, Dr. Gejda and David Roach. Mr. Alexander seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 2 – Executive Session
Executive session ended at 7:30 p.m.

Item 4 – Action Regarding Executive Session Item
MOTION: Mr. Alexander moved that the Board of Education appoint David Roach Assistant Principal for Newtown High School to begin July 28, 2014 with salary per the administrators' contract. Ms. Hamilton seconded. Motion passes unanimously.
Mr. Roach thanked the Board of Education, Dr. Erardi, Dr. Rodrigue and Dr. Abbey for this opportunity.

Item 6 – Celebration of Excellence
Dr. Erardi introduced Karen King and Valerie Pagano Hepburn, teachers at Reed Intermediate School, to speak about the fundraising there which raised $5,564 to be used for a school in Liberia and a well in memory of Sandy Hook School.

Item 3 – Pledge of Allegiance

Item 5 – Election of Board Chair
Mrs. Leidlein nominated Keith Alexander as chair.
Mr. Freedman nominated Kathy Hamilton as chair.

Mrs. Leidlein stated that Mr. Alexander was a Board member for three and a half years and has demonstrated his commitment to bettering education in Newtown. He has served on the technology and communications committees, brings clear thinking to discussions and demonstrates the ability to work with others and also respects their opinions.
Mr. Alexander said he was looking forward to being chair to keep the district moving forward with as many diverse discussions we can have continuing to do the right things for the children.

Mr. Freedman said that Ms. Hamilton was an exemplary person with incredible organizational skills. She is a true leader who can work with the municipal side of our community and is the chair of the CIP and policy committees.

Ms. Hamilton stated this was her second term in the Board for a total of three and a half years. The chair should facilitate the will of the board and communicate between the board and the superintendent and communicate the goals to the public.

Mrs. Roche shared Mr. Freedman's comments and also supports Ms. Hamilton. She is dedicated to this town, is always transparent and shares information with the Board.

The Board took a ballot vote with the results read by Mrs. Roche.

Vote: Mrs. Leidlein voted for Mr. Alexander
        Mr. Alexander voted for himself.
        Mrs. Ku voted for Mr. Alexander
        Mr. Vouros voted for Mr. Alexander
        Mr. Freedman voted for Ms. Hamilton
        Mrs. Roche voted for Ms. Hamilton
        Ms. Hamilton voted for herself.

The new chair is Mr. Alexander.

Item 7 – Consent Agenda
MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein moved that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which includes the minutes of June 30, 2014, the donations to Sandy Hook School, the resignation of Liesl Fressola, the resignation of Mary Blair and the correspondence report. Mrs. Ku seconded.

MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein moved to remove the minutes of June 30, 2014 because Mrs. Ku did not attend that meeting. Mrs. Ku seconded. Motion passes unanimously.
Vote on consent agenda: Motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein moved to approve the minutes of June 30, 2014. Mrs. Roche seconded.
Vote: 6 ayes, 1 abstained (Mrs. Ku)

Item 8 – Public Participation - none

Item 9 – Reports
There was no Chair report.
Superintendent's Report:
Included in Dr. Erardi's report was projected class size for the elementary schools and personalized learning information from the Administrative Institute held earlier this month which he thanked Dr. Gejda for putting together. He spoke about his goals which will be moved on in August that he developed through input from administrators and Board members. Those goals are to provide focused, systematic, and sustainable funding for the improvement of student learning, to enhance educational partnerships throughout the Newtown community, to enhance the district's Technology Plan for students and staff, and to create a student/staff Celebration of Excellence program throughout the district. Also included was the PTA Presidents for the 2014-2015 school year, information on the impact of the 2014 Affordable Care Act and the AASA document on common core and other state standards.

Committee Reports:
Ms. Hamilton would address the CIP committee later on the agenda.

Mr. Freedman would report on the Climate and Culture Committee at the next meeting.
Reed School Scheduling Report:
Mrs. Uberti said they wanted to preserve everything that was offered to students, restructure the time and streamline the instructional day for teachers. This schedule also incorporates a recess and builds in more planning time for teachers.

Ms. Hamilton asked when collaboration occurred.
Mrs. Uberti said next year all specials will be the whole year instead of being rotations which allows more time for collaboration.
Mrs. Roche asked her to share the class schedule with the Board.

Mr. Vouros asked what happened during homeroom.
Mrs. Uberti stated they are using that time to implement responsive classroom. Eliminating learning lab gives teachers time to connect with students.
Mr. Vouros asked about bus arrival times.
Mrs. Uberti said the start time is 8:05 a.m. and the buses have been on time.
Mrs. Roche asked her to attend a future meeting to share the results of the changes with the Board.

Item 10 – Old Business
Action on Gates Pilot Program:
MOTION: Mrs. Roche moved that the Board of Education approve the GATES Pilot Program for the 2014-2015 school year. Mr. Vouros seconded.

Mrs. Haggard gave an overview and timeline for this program.
Dr. Erardi said we are looking to pilot this program for one year and hire two .4 positions which are in the budget to work with the teacher.
Mrs. Haggard said these positions would serve Reed and the middle schools. The program will serve approximately 25 students in grades 4 to 8.

Mrs. Leidlein asked about the identification process and who would be responsible for communicating the criteria for the program to the parents.
Mrs. Haggard said it would come through the pupil services office with the supervisor of special education overseeing the program.

Mr. Vouros asked how the busing cost was determined.
Mrs. Haggard spoke to the bus company that will be charging $50 per trip.
Dr. Gejda said the idea was to utilize the timing of bus routes so the first run to the middle school and high school would pick up the elementary students and bring them to Reed.
Dr. Erardi said this was a very efficient process for very few dollars for transportation to Reed one day per week.

Mr. Freedman asked if this had any implication on the bus contract.
Dr. Erardi stated it was looked at as an in-district field trip. All-Star was willing to make this happen.
The cost was questioned. Mr. Bienkowski said we have a shuttle rate and hourly rate. If it is beyond the tier, the rate is $50 per day.
Motion passes unanimously.

<u>Item 11 – New Business</u>
School Based Health Clinic Update:
Dr. Erardi said this conversation has been ongoing for four or five months. He introduced the committee members that included Tom Einhorn, Anne Dalton, Melanie Bonjour, Dr. Ana Paula Machado, Dr. Tom Draper in place of Donna Culbert, and Judy Blanchard. The Department of Education representative Dave Esquith was also supportive of this clinic. There is a funding stream that could be in place by December of January.

Melanie Bonjour, coordinator of the school based health centers in Danbury, spoke about the centers with the oldest being in Danbury High School for 20 years and 80 centers in the state. There is a need to have health care for adolescents.

Tom Einhorn spoke about a school visit and had spoken to the middle school nurses who fully support this idea. We identified space in close proximity to the nurse's office across the hall.

Mrs. Leidlein feels this is valuable to working parents who also have the option of not participating.
Dr. Machado feels this is a terrific resource. To have a medical provider to be able to communicate with the student's doctor and follow up is huge.

Mr. Freedman was concerned that it was a duplication of services we already have like our psychologists, counselors and school nurses. It could be a financial concern if the state money isn't there.
Dr. Draper said there is a big difference between a nurse and nurse practitioner. They can prescribe medicine right away and keep students in school. It moves the process ahead.

Mrs. Bonjour said state funding is always questionable but these centers are strongly backed by the state legislators. Getting care in school is less expensive than going to the emergency room. The centers can also bill Medicaid and private insurance companies.

Mr. Freedman was concerned about our nurse's union contract.
Anne Dalton said the nurses were very positive about having centers in our schools. Having it in the schools is making it easy for the students. Across the board we are seeing more frequent visits to the nurses.

Mrs. Hamilton sees that it is helpful to have it in the schools especially when parents work a distance away but is worried about the funding stream and the cost to run the center. She is not sure we really have a need.

Judy Blanchard said they went to Branford because it was more like Newtown. No one could give us a downside. Danbury has had this for 20 years fully budgeted by the state. We will have the need after the counselors are gone. There is a lot of need here that is not recognized. We have students with a lot of avoidance issues now so it would be helpful to get them services they need.

Mrs. Bonjour said they have had no budget cuts in the 20 years in Danbury. There is also interest on the federal level. The community has needs which is why we have Kevin's Community Center.

Mrs. Roche commented that the nurse's offices are always full. Many students are not sick but are needy. She welcomes this and asked how we would evaluate this along the way to make sure it's something we want to continue.

Mrs. Bonjour said there would be ongoing communication with the administration and Board of Education.

Dr. Erardi asked the Board to consider the committee coming to the August 19 meeting. We could also arrange for any Board members to visit a clinic when school is back in session to be able to make an informed decision.

Mr. Vouros agreed with Mrs. Roche about the number of students in the nurses offices. It is a comfort area for many students.

Mrs. Leidlein supports this as an enhancement and feels it should also be in the high school.

Mr. Alexander felt they should follow Dr. Erardi's advice.

Dr. Nowacki stated that we need to communicate between schools and home and approves of the centers.

Item 10 – Old Business (continued)
Discussion of CIP:
Ms. Hamilton said we are still looking at the high school auditorium project. She met with Gino Faiella and Chuck Boos regarding the old estimate of $2.3M. Mr. Boos will be ready to present to the Board at the August 19 meeting.
There was no Sandy Hook School update.

Item 11 – New Business (continued)
Schematic Funding Authorization for High School Auditorium Project:
Mr. Bienkowski said this funding was for payment to Mr. Boos to work on the estimate.
MOTION: Ms. Hamilton moved that the Board of Education approve, in accordance with Policy 3-800, an expenditure of $12,500 from the Facilities Rental Fund (aka the Custodial Account) for the purpose of developing schematics and a cost estimate for the high school auditorium CIP project. Mr. Freedman seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 12 – Public Participation - none
MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein moved to adjourned. Mr. Vouros seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 13 – Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 10:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

_____
                              Kathy Hamilton
                              Secretary

DONATIONS

To BOE for Approval on July 15, 2014

7/15/2014

SHES

Pepsico Employee Giving Program, Carrollton, TX		$112.50		
Greater Lawrence Technical School, Andover MA (for Student Activity Fund)	$	279.56		
Total	$	392.06	$	392.06

SHES Library

		$ -

Newtown Public Schools

$ -	

Middle Gate School

Total	$ -	$ -	

NPS Teachers

$ -	
$	392.06
$	392.06

July 1, 2014

Dr. Joseph V. Erardi, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools
3 Primrose Street
Newtown, CT 06470

Dr. Erardi,

This letter is to inform you that I am resigning from my current position as a 4th grade teacher at Sandy Hook School. I have accepted a job as an Elementary Math Specialist in the Danbury School District. I look forward to this next step in my career, but will always hold the memories of Newtown and Sandy Hook close to me.

Sincerely,

Liesl Fressola
69 Old Ridgebury Road
Danbury, CT 06810

CC: Kathy Gombos

ADDITIONAL CONSENT AGENDA ITEM

July 15, 2014

Dr. Joseph Erardi
Superintendent
Newtown Public Schools
3 Primrose Street
Newtown, CT 06470

Dear Dr. Erardi:

Please accept this letter as my resignation from my position as Language Arts Consultant at Middle Gate Elementary. I have accepted a position as a Literacy Specialist at Samuel Staples Elementary School in Easton.

My seven years in Newtown, specifically at Middle Gate, have been the most rewarding of my career. I have grown professionally and personally. My colleagues at Middle Gate will always be my family and Newtown will always be close to my heart.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at home at (203) 396-0116. Thank you very much.

Respectfully,

Mary Blair

From	Date	Subject
James Hsieh	7/7/2014	ESY Busing Confusion

Administrative Report

Tuesday, July 15th

1. **Class Size: K-4 2014-2015** (Attachment #1)

2. **Administrative Institute: Personalized Learning** (Attachment #2)

3. **Superintendent's Goals and Objectives** (Attachment #3)

4. **2014-2015 Parent Leaders** (Attachment #4)

5. **Affordable Care Act – Local Impact – Connecticut -** (Attachment #5)

6. **Common Core – National Perspective**(Attachment #6)

2014-15 PROJECTED CLASS SIZES K-4

HAW	KINDER	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD	FOURTH	TOTALS
ENROLLED	50	64	60	69	80	323
CLASS SIZES	16, 17, 17	16, 16, 16, 16	20, 20, 20	23, 23, 23	20, 20, 20, 20	
SHS						
ENROLLED	63	78	61	65	93	360
CLASS SIZES	15, 16, 16, 16	19, 19, 20, 20	15, 15, 15, 16	16, 16, 16, 17	18, 18, 19, 19, 19	
MG						
ENROLLED	67	64	84	84	94	393
CLASS SIZES	16, 17, 17, 17	16, 16, 16, 16	21, 21, 21, 21	21, 21, 21, 21	23, 23, 24, 24	
HOM						
ENROLLED	52	43	75	74	62	306
CLASS SIZES	17, 17, 18	14, 14, 15	18, 19, 19, 19	24, 25, 25	20, 21, 21	

7/14/2014

HAW	KINDER	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD	FOURTH	TOTALS
ENROLLED	49	64	61	72	80	326
CLASS SIZES	16, 16, 17	16, 16, 16, 16	20, 20, 21	24, 24, 24	20, 20, 20, 20	
SHS						
ENROLLED	61	77	62	65	94	359
CLASS SIZES	15, 15, 15, 16	19, 19, 19, 20	15, 15, 16, 16	16, 16, 16, 17	18, 19, 19, 19, 19	
MG						
ENROLLED	68	64	83	84	94	393
CLASS SIZES	17, 17, 17, 17	16, 16, 16, 16	20, 21, 21, 21	21, 21, 21, 21	23, 23, 24, 24	
HOM						
ENROLLED	55	44	76	74	61	310
CLASS SIZES	18, 18, 19	14, 15, 15	19, 19, 19, 19	24, 25, 25	20, 20, 21	

6/27/2014

HAW	KINDER	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD	FOURTH	TOTALS
ENROLLED	48	63	61	72	80	324
CLASS SIZES	16, 16, 16	15, 16, 16, 16	20, 20, 21	24, 24, 24	20, 20, 20, 20	
SHS						
ENROLLED	65	78	65	63	93	364
CLASS SIZES	16, 16, 16, 17	19, 19, 20, 20	16, 16, 16, 17	15, 16, 16, 16	18, 18, 19, 19, 19	
MG						
ENROLLED	65	64	82	88	94	393
CLASS SIZES	16, 16, 16, 17	16, 16, 16, 16	19, 19, 19, 20	22, 22, 22, 22	23, 23, 24, 24	
HOM						
ENROLLED	51	44	69	74	64	302
CLASS SIZES	17, 17, 17	14, 15, 15	17, 17, 17, 18	24, 25, 25	21, 21, 22	

6/3/2014

What is Personalized Learning?

A public education system that is student-centered is better able to meet the needs of today's learners. The very nature of personalized learning requires a departure from one-size-fits all education. Personalized learning allows for a wide range of practices. However, several key characteristics are present in personalized learning:

- <u>Learner Profiles</u> convey how a student learns best. The Learner Profile is used to plan a customized learning plan and instructional strategies.

- <u>Student interests</u> play a role in determining the learning path for a student. Teachers and other key staff members get to know each student so that instruction can be customized.

- <u>Customized Learning Paths</u> – Students have an authentic voice in creating a learning path based on their unique interests, strengths and learner profile. Learning can take place <u>anytime</u> and <u>anywhere</u>. Customized Learning Paths are relevant, rigorous and individually paced. Customized Learning Paths are often supported by technology and integrate effective innovative practices.

- <u>Proficiency or Mastery Based progress</u> – Progress is based in what students have learned, not how much time they have spent in school. A variety of assessments are used to demonstrate learning of academic competencies and 21st century skills. Students have a choice guided by their teacher and parent(s) of the types of assessments that they will use to demonstrate their learning. The assessment choices are part of their customized learning path. Feedback occurs in frequent cycles connected to learning goals. The feedback is designed to suggest the next step in the learning process.

- <u>Student learning needs</u> – All students are expected to demonstrate mastery of rigorous, comprehensive standards. Student performance is tracked and analyzed using sophisticated data management systems.

- <u>Personalized learning plans</u> utilizing learner profiles, student interests, learning paths and learning needs guide students in developing the required lifelong learning standards. Personalized learning plans show what competencies have been mastered, which ones are the current focus, and what the student needs to do next.

  Personalized learning plans assist in creating connections between students' lives in the classroom and in the community. Students can pursue their interest to provide meaning and excitement to their learning.

Personalized learning will continue to evolve and grow. Implementation will have many policy and operational ramification and requirements. Because students learn at different paces in a personalized learning system, a range of student supports will be necessary to help all students to succeed.

In competency-based pathways, student progress is based on mastery. Students advance by demonstrating proficiency through assessments of their achievements including performance assessments, projects, traditional assessments, etc. Educators have greater flexibility in personalized learning settings to create rich learning tasks that engage students independently or collaboratively. Utilizing a broad range of learning opportunities including project based learning, small group instruction, traditional classroom instruction, individual tutoring, online learning, etc. Educators are able to be creative in how instruction is delivered.

Patrick, Susan and Chris Sturgis, Cracking the Code: Synchronizing Policy and Practice for Performance – Based Learning, NACOL, Vienna, VA, 2011.

_____, Partnership for Next Generation Learning – Innovation Lab Network, CCSSO (Council of Chief State School Officers) and Stupski Foundation, August, 2010.

Sturgis, Chris and Susan Patrick, When Success Is the Only Option: Designing Competency-Based Pathways for Next Generation Learning, NACOL, Vienna, VA   .

Competency-based learning means letting students learn academic content in new ways. It means agreeing on what constitutes mastery, and holding all students to it, instead of letting some students earn diplomas with work skills. It means figuring out multi-faceted ways for students to show what they know. It also means letting students progress towards mastery at their own pace.

Student Centered Learning

Why student-centered learning?

To prepare for our future as a nation in an increasingly global, complex, and fast-changing society, dramatic change in our educational system is needed. At Nellie Mae Education Foundation, we strive to create opportunities so that all New England students, especially those who are currently underserved, are able to obtain a meaningful post-secondary degree or credential.

We can no longer afford to accept inequality in educational opportunity. We recognize that achieving success for all students requires creation of an orchestra of balanced parts, including schools, families, and communities, that will not only result in much higher outcomes for students who are currently underserved, but also close the gaps between what students are currently learning and what they will need to know to succeed.

Recent research from neuroscience and developmental theory on how people learn, coupled with new technological tools that support greater adaptability in the learning process, are moving education away from "one-size-fits-all" practices towards more customized, innovative approaches to student-centered learning.

What are the principles of student-centered learning?

1. Student-centered education systems provide all students equal access to the skills and knowledge needed for college and career readiness in today's world.

2. Student-centered education systems align with current research on the learning process and motivation.

3. Student-centered education systems focus on mastery of skills and knowledge.

4. Student-centered education systems build student's identities through a positive culture with a foundation of strong relationships and high expectations.

5. Student-centered education systems empower and support parents, teachers, administrators, and other community members to encourage and guide learners through their educational journey.

What are the key attributes of student-centered learning?

We have identified four key attributes of the SCL instructional core:

1. Curriculum, instruction and assessment embrace the skills and knowledge needed for success in college and careers

   Learners are actively engaged in meaningful, authentic tasks that build skills in critical thinking, problem solving, and communication as well as core subject areas like ELA, math and science. Learning opportunities are designed with the learner in mind, and can be differentiated depending on the learner's profile of needs and interests.

   Examples: Expeditionary Learning, Asia Society ISSN, New Tech Network, High Tech High

2. **Community assets are harnessed to support and deepen learning experiences**

The schools walls are permeable—benefitting from multiple outside individual, organizational, and technological resources. Learner's experiences build their cultural and academic identities through meaningful exposure to a variety of workplaces, role models, career pathways, online resources, community leaders, peer teachers, apprenticeships, internships, college courses, and projects.

Examples: Big Picture Learning, Expeditionary Learning, VOISE Academy High School, High Tech High

3. **Time is used flexibly and includes learning opportunities outside the traditional school day and year**
Time is fully utilized to optimize student learning as well as provide time for educators to engage in reflection and planning. Students have equitable opportunities to learn outside of the typical school day and year in a variety of settings and can receive credit for this learning based on demonstration of skills and knowledge.

Examples: Brooklyn Generation School, Envision Schools, Thomas Haney High School

4. **Mastery-based strategies are employed to allow for pacing based on proficiency in skills and knowledge**
Progress is based primarily on mastery of a body of skill or knowledge, rather than a student's age, hours on task, or credits. Mastery-based (also referred to as competency-based) approaches transfer primary responsibility for learning to the student, and provide ongoing information on progress toward goals.

Examples: Adams 50, Florida Virtual Academy, School of One, Francis W. Parker Charter School, Young Women's Leadership Charter School of Chicago

What resources and supports are needed?

To become student-centered, education systems may need to realign key infrastructure and supports, such as: data systems; assessment systems; human capital development and delivery; management and leadership; and the technology needed to support all of the above. Of course, schools that are student-centered exist in a larger system of resources, policies, and community support, all of which will have a significant impact on the ultimate success of schools and students.

Newtown Public Schools
Draft – Superintendent's Goals Representing the Commitment of the Newtown Board of Education

<u>Superintendent's Goals for the 2014-2015 School Year</u>

1. To provide focused, systematic, and sustainable funding for the improvement of student learning:

> On or before August 1st meet with the newly reconstituted curriculum subcommittee of the NBOE to establish goals and priorities for the 2014-2015 school year:

- Examine both horizontal and vertical alignment of instruction paying close attention to transition grades 4/5, 6/7, 8/9.
- Review recently established (2013-2014) all-day kindergarten.
- Review recently established pedagogy with Columbia's Readers and Writers Workshop.
- Explore and recommend to the NBOE findings pertaining to K-12 world language.
- Review present framework for homebound instruction.
- Continue to monitor and review the K-12 GATES program.
- Explore the virtual learning framework at NHS in both a personalized and blended protocol.
- Review present alternative programming and report back to the NBOE with findings on or before February 1, 2015.
- Recommend to the NBOE a complete professional development needs assessment prior to the adoption of the 2015-2016 school calendar.

> On or before October 1st complete the design and the membership of the district's long term planning committee with a target date to report findings back to the NBOE on or before May 2015.

> On or before December 1, 2014 report back to the Newtown Board of Education with the results of the ongoing enrollment study.

> On or before January 1, 2015 report back to the NBOE with an update of the joint facility study in partnership with the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance.

2. To enhance educational partnerships throughout the Newtown community.

> On or before October 1, 2014 establish partnerships with senior citizens and the Senior Citizen Center.

> On or before September 1, 2014 produce a monthly broadcast on the local access station to better inform the community about its school system.

> Throughout the 2014-2015 school year meet and speak to civic organizations in Newtown to better inform their membership of the mission / vision / philosophy of the Newtown Board of Education.

> On or before September 1, 2014 establish a strong partnership with police and fire to ensure safe schools:

- Maintain a positive relationship with the Newtown and Monroe Police Department
- Facilitate the Newtown Safety Committee.
- Monitor the recently established retired officer armed security program.
- Meet monthly with the district's security director.

> On or before September 1, 2014 meet with all stakeholders that will continue to support the recovery process for the NBOE staff, students and their parents:

- Establish a weekly meeting with the SERV grant director to fully understand and support all mental health recovery issues.
- On or before December 1, 2014 report to the NBOE the ongoing recovery of the district as supported by the Department of Justice and Department of Education.

PTA Presidents
2014-2015

Hawley School

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Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents
2014 Affordable Care Act Survey Highlights
July 3, 2014

In June 2014 the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) conducted a survey of Connecticut public school districts. The survey requested data to estimate the potential cost impact of the Affordable Care Act to Connecticut School Districts with specific focus on the Excise Tax.

Highlights of Results:

Response Summary
- 75 responses were received including 3 Regional Education Services Centers
- That's approximately 51% of Connecticut public school districts, assuming 146 total school districts [to arrive at 146 multiple towns that are part of Regional School Districts were counted as one (e.g. Middlebury and Southbury count as one since they are part of the RSD 15)]
- Two responses were excluded due to data inconsistencies with their survey response bringing the reported districts to 73 or 50%

Notable Findings
- 90% of districts will have projected premiums at or above the Excise Tax thresholds in 2018
- Of the remaining 10% (7 districts) all but two are projected to meet or exceed the thresholds in 2019, with one meeting in 2020 and one in 2021
- Nearly 20% of districts are at or above the threshold amounts today (2014 Rates). That increases to 42% in 2015, nearly 70% in 2016, and 86% in 2017.
- The projected Excise Tax for the 73 districts reporting is $34M in 2018. That equates to about 5% of the projected total cost in 2018. That is an additional 5% increase on top of any other anticipated rate increase in 2018.
- The average weighted monthly premiums (includes adjustments to account for employer HSA contributions) for 2014 are: $769 Single, $1,580 Two Person, and $2,038 Family. These average rates are expected to exceed the thresholds in 2018. In order to stay just below the thresholds in 2018, plan design offsets worth about 20% would be required. Plan offsets of that magnitude are not common or expected based on historic collective bargaining settlements.
- The 73 reporting districts reported 1,500 employees who currently work on average 30 hours or more per week but are not currently offered coverage. School districts will be subject to potential penalties if they do not offer coverage in 2015 and/or 2016 (depending on size) and beyond.
- The projected Transitional Reinsurance Fee for the 73 reporting districts is nearly $4.5M
- The Insurer Fee if applicable to all 73 reporting districts is nearly $12.2M (assumes all reporting districts are Fully Insured)

Assumptions Made
- Estimated Excise Tax Amounts were calculated off the current rates and enrollment reported in the survey with an assumed 8% trend increase per year
- Only Employer HSA contributions were included in the Excise Tax calculation. No assumption was made for potential employee HSA contributions made through payroll or FSA/HRA disbursements.
- 2 Person and Family Rates were blended to calculate the tax impact for other than single coverage (results will vary if you apply the 2 Person and the Family Rates individually to the non-single threshold)

Congressional District	Number of School Districts Reporting	Total Number of Districts	Percent Reporting
1	17	25	68%
2	29	54	54%
3	8	21	38%
4	5	16	31%
5	17	30	57%
Total *	73	146	50%

Congressional District	30+Hour Employees Not Offered Coverage Today
1	343
2	321
3	256
4	34
5	564
Total *	1515

Congressional District	Estimated Transitional Reinsurance Fee	Estimated Insurer Fee**
Assumed Fee	$5.25 PMPM	2.5%
1	$1,253,228	$3,278,151
2	$1,062,810	$2,899,158
3	$601,178	$1,825,532
4	$469,035	$1,212,872
5	$1,301,895	$3,550,866
Total *	$4,477,883	$12,172,753

Congressional District	2014 Weighted Average Premium		
	Single	Two Person	Family
1	$718	$1,455	$1,943
2	$783	$1,595	$2,081
3	$816	$1,697	$2,238
4	$818	$1,651	$2,174
5	$771	$1,635	$1,984
Total *	$769	$1,580	$2,038

Congressional District	Projected Total Excise Tax 2018	Excise Tax as a Percentage of Total Spending	Number Incurring Tax by 2018	Percent Incurring Tax by 2018	Number At or Above Thresholds Before 2018	Percent At or Above Thresholds Before 2018
1	$5,975,202	3.2%	15	88.2%	13	76.5%
2	$8,334,098	5.0%	28	96.6%	27	93.1%
3	$7,949,477	7.6%	7	87.5%	7	87.5%
4	$4,096,620	5.6%	5	100.0%	5	100.0%
5	$10,078,171	5.0%	14	82.4%	14	82.4%
Total *	$33,999,327	4.9%	66	90.4%	63	86.3%

*Table Totals will not match sum of rows in each table as some school districts are in multiple congressional districts and reported in each congressional district but only once in the Total

**Insurer Fee applies to Fully Insured Employers only. Survey did not request funding type. The values reported assume all reporting districts are Fully Insured and thus the subject to the Insurer Fee. Self Funded employers would not be subject to this fee.

AASA Research

Common Core and Other State Standards

This study, released in June 2014, report follows a survey of superintendents nationwide which received more than 500 responses from 48 states. The report's findings echoed the position AASA has taken on Common Core: we need to slow down to get it right.

The survey's key findings included:

- Superintendents overwhelmingly (92.5 percent) see the new standards as more rigorous than previous standards.
- More than three quarters (78.3 percent) agree that the education community supports the standards, but that support drops to 51.4 percent among the general public.
- Nearly three quarters of the respondents (73.3 percent) agree that the political debate has gotten in the way of the implementation of the new standards.
- Nearly half (47 percent) say their input was never requested in the decision to adopt or develop new standards or in planning the implementation.
- More than half (60.3 percent) of the respondents who had begun testing say they are facing problems with the tests.
- Just under half (41.9 percent) say schools in their states are not ready to implement the online assessment, while 35.9 percent say they lack the infrastructure to support online assessments.

The results from the survey demonstrate that districts are working with limited resources to implement the new, more rigorous standards, despite technology deficits, a dearth of quality professional development materials for school personnel and a challenging national debate. These results reinforce the AASA position that the standards will be a positive change, if districts are given the necessary time and funding to properly implement the new standards and assessments.

AASA

THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION

Common Core and Other State Standards:
Superintendents Feel Optimism, Concern and Lack of Support

Leslie A. Finnan

Daniel A. Domenech, AASA Executive Director

I.   Introduction

For months, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have been debated throughout the media, legislatures, education organizations, and households across the country. Education groups have released statements both in favor[1] of the standards and opposed.[2] As these arguments are being tossed around, 44 states and D.C. are implementing CCSS and other states are implementing new college and career ready state standards outside of the CCSS. AASA supports high standards for all students, be they through the CCSS or other state-specific standards, but believes that schools and districts should be given the time necessary to fully implement the standards before judging their success, and assessments should be used in the manner for which they were designed and evaluated before any high-stakes outcomes are attached to their results.

Put another way, AASA proposes a purposeful approach of "slow down to get it right," to ensure that schools and teachers have the resources they need to successfully implement the standards and aligned assessments in a way that bolsters student learning. This includes time and support for teachers to meaningfully adopt the standards into their teaching with curriculum and instructional materials aligned to the standards. It also requires a deliberate effort to ensure that the related assessments are used for the purposes for which they were designed. While we will likely eventually reach a time where a single test can accurately assess both student learning and teacher effectiveness, we are not there yet. The CCSS-aligned tests were designed to assess student achievement, and any effort to rush implementation of them that includes using the test data to inform teacher evaluation is ill-conceived. Frustration over an arbitrary deadline to implement tests in a manner for which they were not intended threatens the good that stands to be gained from successful implementation of the CCSS and related assessments.

> "Don't fly the ship while you are building it. Students shouldn't be stressed about testing on something they have never been taught. Teachers shouldn't be evaluated on the success of students on the tests when they have not been teaching the breadth of the CCSS." –
> *Superintendent in Connecticut*

Whatever happens in the news and the political debate, districts are already hard at work implementing these new standards and their related assessments. In order to see how the implementation of the new standards is faring, AASA conducted a survey of superintendents and administrators throughout the country in April, 2014. With 525 responses representing 48 states, the survey provides a glimpse into the planning and implementation of the new standards and assessments as well as the support superintendents are receiving from the state and community.

Overall, most superintendents have already begun to implement the new standards, which they see as much more rigorous than previous standards. The new standards will increase students' critical thinking skills and ensure that they are more prepared for college and the modern workforce than previous standards did. School and district staff are viewed as prepared and engaged in implementation of the new standards. Several separate surveys show that teachers, overall, are very supportive of the new standards. In a recent *School Administrator* article, Susan Bunting, superintendent of the Indian River school district

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[1] For examples of reports in favor, see National Council of Teachers of Math, Fordham Institute
[2] For examples of reports in opposition, see Heritage Foundation, Diane Ravitch

in Delaware, added that the new standards are also creating a culture of experimentation and innovation among teachers in her district.

As states made the decision to implement the new standards, superintendents report they were rarely asked to provide input, despite their extensive knowledge of their district's entire education system. This lack of communication, as well as a lack of state support for the districts comes up throughout the survey; superintendents feel that support from their states and state agencies is insufficient, and that more communication would benefit their implementation of the new standards.

The political debate around the new standards is a hurdle that has been difficult to get past. While misinformation is widespread, community support for the standards is mixed. The education community supports the standards, while the broader community's support for the standards is lower than that of the education community. Support for the new assessments is lower for both groups than for the standards. Respondents do not believe the broader community understands the relationship between the standards and the assessments, which is considered the main problem with the new standards for many community members.

As we hear in the public backlash and the complaints of educators, the assessments pose the largest problem. They are the biggest obstacle for the respondents, and, for those who have begun to test, the testing is not going smoothly. Technology problems pose the largest problem for the assessments. Support from both the education community and the broader community is also lower for the assessments than the standards themselves, and understanding of the relationship between the standards and assessments is seen to be limited. This misunderstanding is very important, given the frustration seen regarding the assessments. Delaying the assessments, especially the high-stakes actions tied to the assessments, would give superintendents more opportunity to implement the standards and prepare their schools for the assessments themselves. A delay in implementing new assessments would also improve community and teacher support for the standards.

II.   Findings

The findings reiterate what AASA members had been reporting less formally and show that superintendents are very involved and invested in the implementation and success of the new standards and assessments. As superintendents actively work to update their districts' curriculum, materials, professional development, and technological capacity, students and teachers are beginning to be affected by the new standards and assessments. The transition has been bumpy, but superintendents remain optimistic about the new standards and are working to ensure the implementation of the new standards leads to successful outcomes for their students.

Adoption

The survey respondents have overwhelmingly already adopted CCSS. Out of the total responses, 86.5 percent have decided to adopt CCSS, while 8.3 percent have decided to adopt or are considering adoption of other new non-CCSS new state standards. Less than one percent report that their states are not considering new standards, be they CCSS or other state standards. Of those implementing either CCSS or other new state standards, most have already implemented the new standards. Over half (55.3 percent) are

at least two years into the implementation, while 7.1 percent are implementing in the next school year (2014-2015).

Given the overwhelming confusion regarding the standards and assessments by the public, it is encouraging that respondents overwhelmingly (92.5 percent) see the new standards as more rigorous than previous standards. Only 2.1 percent see them as less rigorous. In summary, given the time to be properly implemented, these new standards will provide a more rigorous curriculum and will ensure that students who graduate from high school are more ready for careers or college and will need less remediation.

Governors, state boards or state superintendents have considered pulling out of the testing consortiums because of issues with the assessments and political backlash (including Louisiana, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and South Carolina). Indiana has since withdrawn from the standards and implemented its own set of state standards, "Hoosier Core," which differs little from the CCSS standards. At the time of the survey, the CCSS respondents are almost evenly split between the testing consortiums. Of the respondents, 35.6 percent are part of PARCC and 47.9 percent Smarter Balanced. This is similar to the percentage of states belonging to the two consortia: 31.8 percent of states in CCSS belong to PARCC and 47.7 percent to Smarter Balanced. Only 15.7 percent of superintendents say they are in neither group. Despite the move of many state lawmakers to distance themselves from the tests, most superintendents do not think their state will pull out of the standards themselves; 74.8 percent say their state would probably or definitely not pull out, and only 3.9 percent say their state will probably pull out of the standards.[3]

While the superintendents see the new standards as more rigorous and are implementing them, they report several obstacles to proper implementation. The biggest obstacles are assessments (73.3 percent), teacher training/professional development (65.2 percent), finding instructional materials (58.2 percent) and state support (52.3 percent).

Despite their important role in the education system of the state, many superintendents felt that their input was not requested in the decision to adopt or develop new standards or in planning the implementation. Nearly half (47 percent) say their input was never requested, and only 20.1 percent say their input was requested throughout the process. The other 32.9 percent say their input was requested sporadically – either initially only or once the decision had been made.

> "We were given no voice in the decision when Common Core was first adopted. We were not listened to when we tried to communicate what eliminating the Common Core would mean to meeting the timelines that had been established."
> *Superintendent in Indiana*

Implementation

Despite having little input into the standards adoption or development process, superintendents feel, overall, directly involved in most aspects of implementation of the new standards. The aspects in which respondents are most directly involved is professional development (68.8 percent directly involved, 2.1 percent not involved), and least directly involved is in materials (47 percent directly involved, 6.2 percent not involved) and community support (61.1 percent directly involved, 7.4 percent not involved).

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[3] Coming from Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio and Oklahoma

Survey respondents were asked to describe the knowledge/awareness of the standards and assessment within their community, including educators and the community in general. Education professionals in the districts are viewed as highly prepared and involved in the implementation of the standards. Eighty-one percent say that administrators/education leaders are prepared, and 85.8 percent say that they are involved. Principals are said to be prepared by 80.7 percent and involved by 87.4 percent. Teachers are reported to be prepared by 79.8 percent and involved by 86.9 percent. Curriculum staff and technology staff are 79.5 and 72.4 percent prepared and 86.6 and 75.1 percent involved, respectively. State officials and school board members are seen as the least prepared (56.3 percent and 56.1 percent, respectively) and involved (53.5 percent and 41.9 percent, respectively).

To ensure teachers are ready to teach the new standards, most respondents say professional development has changed. Over half (58.2 percent) say it has changed drastically or a great deal, while another 40.1 percent say it has changed some or a little. Since the new assessments are online and technology issues are the biggest barrier in the assessments, professional development should address technology so all teachers can prepare their students for the assessments. Technology plays a major role in professional development for 45.3 percent, some for 44.7 percent, and only a little for 7.8 percent of respondents.

While new teaching materials and textbooks are necessary to properly implement the new standards, 79.8 percent of respondents say that materials have been difficult to find. This echoes a sentiment AASA members had been sharing: the need for aligned curriculum. Our members have reported that they are not finding curricula are actually aligned to the new standards. Companies have been marketing "Common Core-aligned" materials that researchers find are also largely not aligned with the standards. The texts the researchers reviewed were found to not differ greatly from previous, pre-CCSS, texts; they lacked the higher-level thinking required by CCSS, and failed to cover 10 to 15 percent of the material stipulated in the CCSS. Despite the trouble finding appropriate texts, 70.1 percent of respondents say they have thrown out some or all materials that are not aligned with the new standards.

Funding for new materials is difficult to come by (nearly 70 percent of respondents say state support for materials is inadequate), especially after investing in new materials that do not actually align with the new standards, given the misaligned materials discussed previously. This leaves many teachers needing to produce and piece together their own materials and texts, while developing a new curriculum and implementing the new standards. This reiterates the need for more time to properly implement the standards and iron out issues before adding the high-stakes testing.

Assessments

Much of the public's confusion about the Common Core is the misconception that adoption of the new standards will lead to more testing. This misconception adds to the troubles with implementing the new tests, leading most respondents to find assessments to be the biggest problem area with the new standards. Testing has begun for 63.8 percent of respondents, and 60.3 percent of those respondents say it is going with some or great difficulty. Only 9.7 percent say it is going very smoothly. Despite the problems with the assessments, they are part of the teacher evaluation process for 48.8 percent of respondents. This kind of high-stakes testing has troubling outcomes, since the standards are not fully implemented, and many schools are not prepared for the assessments.

AASA opposes the continued reliance on using one-time, snapshot testing for accountability and high-stakes decisions. This one test cannot be expected to properly measure both student learning and teacher

effectiveness. In addition, 32.1 percent of respondents report that the scores from the reading and math assessments are even part of the evaluation for teachers of subjects other than reading and math. Teachers and their advocacy groups are very opposed to these policies because they do not evaluate the teachers appropriately and have the potential to unnecessarily hurt schools with low test scores by forcing out effective teachers.

A major problem with the new assessments is in the lack of necessary technology and bandwidth, rather than in the tests themselves. A recent Education Week report on the field testing of PARCC and Smarter Balanced tests illustrates this; the districts running these trials report that students found the tests harder than previous tests, but enjoyed the style of the tests more than previous standardized tests. The biggest problems found in the field testing were technological; computers froze or restarted, forcing students to retake the tests, or the website was reported to be down. The tests themselves are being improved through the field testing, but technological issues will be multiplied as districts implement the tests in all schools and for all students starting next year.

Similarly, superintendents are more worried about the capacity of schools in their districts to handle the online assessments than the assessments themselves. For example, 41.9 percent of respondents say that schools in their states are not ready to implement the online assessment, and 35.9 percent say they lack the infrastructure to support online assessments. Only 10.2 percent say their state was fully prepared in both funding and bandwidth capacity to implement online assessments and 35.7 percent say their district is fully prepared in both funding and bandwidth capacity to implement online assessments. AASA has been actively involved in the modernization of the E-Rate program, which could increase the amount of money available to support school and library connectivity; this would help with these technology issues. However, even more funding and more time to work out the details are also necessary before these tests are distributed.

State support

Over half of respondents (52.3 percent) are receiving both federal and state support. Of the rest, 21.8 percent report receiving no state or federal support, 22.1 percent receive state only, and 3 percent receive federal only. Despite the majority of respondents receiving support from the state, state support of the implementation is still considered extremely inadequate. It is most inadequate in funding (82.7 percent designated it as inadequate, 16.2 percent adequate and 1.1 percent ample) and materials (69.8 percent report it as inadequate, 27.4 percent adequate and 2.9 percent ample). While it is still not enough for most respondents, the state support is seen to be most adequate in professional development (6.6 percent ample, 36.2 percent adequate and 57.3 percent inadequate) and curriculum (4.9 percent ample, 35.8 percent adequate and 59.2 percent inadequate). Superintendents are being asked to do a lot with very little support, financial or otherwise. More support from the state and federal level would help districts improve implementation, technology, professional development, curriculum development, and more.

State support has changed for respondents in several ways since the adoption of the new standards including for 18.8 percent of respondents who say their states are considering legislative proposals to decrease state policy or funding support for the standards. Other changes include an increase in support for professional development (16.9 percent) and decrease in state funding support (10.8 percent). The level of state support was reported to be unchanged throughout the implementation of the new standards by 26.6 percent of the superintendents.

Given a list of resource options that the state could provide, the option that was said would be most useful is a clearinghouse of approved/aligned curriculum and instructional resources (30.5 percent). Other choices include best-practice examples of implementation (18.4 percent), professional development materials (16.7 percent), best practice examples of assessments (14 percent), and consistent communication with state officials (13.8 percent). Asked separately, just over half of all respondents (58.2 percent) say they would want their state to provide a new curriculum aligned with the new standards for some or all subjects and levels.

Community support

Despite the prevalence of anti-Common Core voices in the news, respondents overall feel that the standards are supported by the community, especially the education community. Of the respondents, 78.3 percent agree that the education community supported the standards, but only 51.4 percent agree that the broader community supported the standards. Not surprisingly given the complexity of the issue, 56.8 percent do not think the broader community understands the standards. Just as they are the biggest barrier to successful implementation for superintendents, the new assessments are supported less than the standards themselves. Only 27.4 percent say the broader community supports the assessments, and 47.5 percent say the education community supports the assessments.

Overall, 73.3 percent think the political debate has gotten in the way of successful implementation. The political backlash mostly stems from misunderstanding and misinformation, especially of the relationship between the standards and testing. By serving as a scapegoat for all of the problems in education throughout the country, the new standards are attacked daily, and parents and other members of the community are damaging the chances of a smooth transition to the new standards.

Given this misinformation, it is crucial that many superintendents are also working to inform the public about the standards and assessments. Seventy-nine percent of superintendents agree that their districts are actively informing stakeholders about the new standards, and 69.7 percent agree that their districts are informing stakeholders about the assessments. However, only 52.1 percent are allowing opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback, and only 43.4 percent for the assessments. To get the message out further, 59.8 percent are preparing school-level staff to answer questions on implementation, and 53 percent on assessments.

> "The political debate has been incredibly frustrating. The standards are good standards and have provided an impetus for positive change in the instructional approach taken in our district. In the political debate, the left has met the right and public educators are stuck in the middle simply trying to do what is best for our students and our teachers."
> *Assistant Superintendent in Montana*

The most active groups in the implementation of the standards have been education groups, but they are not seen to be particularly engaged. The most active groups are the teachers' unions or organizations, which only 63 percent say have been active. Outside of education groups, 61.5 percent say state officials have been active, and 50.3 percent say national organizations. The least active groups are non-instructional support staff (16.5 percent) and community leaders (17.7 percent).

III. Comparison of Responses by Standards Adopted and Poverty Level

The responses were also broken out to determine the effect of which standards are being adopted or implemented (CCSS or non-CCSS) and by the level of poverty in the schools. The new standards are being implemented differently for superintendents with CCSS and those with other standards and for superintendents in high-and low-poverty districts. One big difference between the responses was in the perceived change the new standards will bring. CCSS respondents see the new standards as more rigorous than non-CCSS respondents, and respondents in high-poverty districts see them as a more significant change than respondents in low-poverty districts, as shown in Tables 2 and 6.

Another way in which these respondents differed significantly was in the preparation of staff to implement the new standards. Superintendents in non-CCSS districts and in high-poverty districts both report that staff in their schools, especially teachers, principals, and curriculum and technology staff, are not as prepared to implement the new standards than respondents in CCSS districts or low-poverty districts, as shown in Table 1, below. This lack of preparation could make the implementation much more difficult in these districts. This is especially troubling for high-poverty districts, which also have more technology issues and a more difficult to educate student population. More time and professional development are especially crucial for these districts.

Table 1: Preparation of staff for implementing new standards

	CCSS				Non-CCSS				Low-poverty				High-poverty			
	Teachers	Principals	Tech Staff	Curriculum Staff	Teachers	Principals	Tech Staff	Curriculum Staff	Teachers	Principals	Tech Staff	Curriculum Staff	Teachers	Principals	Tech Staff	Curriculum Staff
Very prepared	22.1	31.4	29.6	45	17.4	26.1	23.9	32.6	28.4	40.2	47.6	65.8	22.4	28.6	25.6	40.5
Somewhat prepared	58.5	50.2	44.3	35.3	54.4	45.7	32.6	39.1	56.8	41.5	34.1	25.3	55.3	49.7	48.1	39.2
Not very prepared	7.4	6.4	7.5	5	19.6	19.6	26.1	17.4	3.7	3.7	4.9	1.3	9.3	9.3	8.1	7.0

CCSS respondents and non-CCSS respondents

The survey was targeted to districts implementing the Common Core State Standards as well as districts implementing new college-and-career-ready state standards other than Common Core. These responses differ from CCSS responses in several important ways, including the rigor of the standards, timing of standards and assessments, and community and staff support and preparation. In the adoption of the new standards, non-CCSS respondents will implement the standards later than CCSS respondents; 23.1 percent more non-CCSS respondents are implementing their states' new standards in the 2014-15 school year than CCSS respondents.

Table 2: How dramatically districts are changing		
	CCSS	Non-CCSS
More rigorous (significantly)	39.7%	37%
More rigorous (moderately)	54.3%	41.3%
No change	4.3%	17.4%
Less rigorous (significantly or moderately)	1.8%	4.4%

The new standards are still seen as a more academically rigorous change, but the degree of change is reported to be less drastic (See Table 2). CCSS respondents say overwhelmingly (94 percent) that the new standards are significantly more rigorous, while only 78.3 percent of non-CCSS respondents say the same. Non-CCSS respondents are also more likely to see no change in the new standards; 13.1 percent more non-CCSS respondents see no change than CCSS respondents.

Non-CCSS respondents report that they face more problems in the implementation of the new standards than CCSS respondents overall. The biggest differences are seen in problems with state support (14.3 percent higher), teacher training (13.1 percent higher) and assessments (9.8 percent higher), as seen in Table 3. However, non-CCSS respondents do feel that their input was more requested throughout the process of adopting the new standards than CCSS respondents; 4.7 percent more non-CCSS respondents say their input was requested throughout, and 10 percent fewer were never asked.

Table 3: Problem areas in implementing the new standards		
	CCSS	Non-CCSS
State support	46.6%	60.9%
Teacher training	58.6%	71.7%
Assessments	66.3%	76.1%

While assessments pose a similar problem for CCSS and non-CCSS respondents, 22.4 percent fewer non-CCSS respondents have begun testing than CCSS respondents. Assessments are also a part of teacher evaluation for 24.1 percent more non-CCSS respondents (65.5 percent of CCSS and 43.2 percent of non-CCSS) and for 25 percent more teachers who do not teach the subjects tested in non-CCSS districts (49.2 percent of CCSS and 73.3 percent of non-CCSS).

Non-CCSS respondents consider their staff to be less prepared to implement the new standards than CCSS respondents. Notably, 12.2 percent more say teachers are not very prepared, 13.2 percent more say principals are not very prepared, 18.6 percent more say technology staff are not very prepared, and 12.4 percent more say curriculum staff are not very prepared, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Staff not prepared to implement new standards		
	CCSS	Non-CCSS
Teachers	7.4%	19.6%
Principals	6.4%	19.6%
Technology staff	7.5%	26.1%
Curriculum staff	5%	17.4%

State support is, overall, seen to be inadequate for both non-CCSS districts and CCSS districts. State funding and support are seen as even more inadequate for non-CCSS respondents. It is seen to be inadequate for 97.8 percent of non-CCSS respondents, compared to 81.2 percent of CCSS respondents,

and professional development support is seen by 30.2 percent more non-CCSS respondents to be inadequate. Since the standards were adopted, 16.7 percent more non-CCSS respondents say that state funding has decreased.

Given the negative politicization of the CCSS, it is not surprising that non-CCSS respondents report having more support from their communities. They agree that the larger community supported the standards more (24.7 percent more than CCSS respondents) and even that the larger community supports the assessments more (17.6 percent more than CCSS respondents).

Despite this, both CCSS and non-CCSS respondents feel that the political debate has gotten in the way of successful implementation at almost identical levels, as shown in Table 5. Non-education groups are also reported to be more active in non-CCSS districts, including elected officials (27.8 percent higher), state officials (11.2 percent higher), university/higher education (32.6 percent higher), and national organizations (33 percent higher).

Table 5: Community support for the new standards and assessments		
	CCSS	Non-CCSS
Larger community supports the standards	49.2%	73.9%
Larger community supports the assessments	25.9%	43.5%
Political debate has gotten in the way	81.6%	80.4%

Comparison by poverty level

The responses were also separated by the percent of students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch in the district in order to determine poverty levels for each respondent. The responses from districts with the lowest poverty rates (zero to 19 percent FRPL) were then compared to the responses from districts with the highest poverty rates (60 percent or greater FRPL).

Table 6: How dramatically districts are changing		
	Low-poverty	High-poverty
More rigorous (significantly)	23.2%	55.8%
More rigorous (moderately)	69.5%	38%
No change	4.9%	3.7%
Less rigorous (significantly or moderately)	2.4%	2.2%

A key goal of CCSS and other new state standards is to hold all students, regardless of poverty or geography, to the same high standards. According to this research, administrators see that happening. High-poverty districts see the new standards as a significantly more rigorous change. The change is seen to be even more significant than respondents from low-poverty districts. Of the high-poverty districts, 32.7 percent more say the change is significantly more rigorous and 31.5 percent fewer say the change is moderately more rigorous, as shown in Table 6.

However, high-poverty districts are in states that are slightly more likely to pull out of the standards. Of the respondents from high-poverty districts, 10.9 percent more say their state will "probably not" pull out of the standards, while 10 percent fewer say no definitively. High-poverty districts are also in states that

belong to neither testing consortium or have recently withdrawn from a testing consortium. Respondents in high-poverty districts are more likely to not be a part of PARCC or Smarter Balanced (14.2 percent more than low-poverty districts), as shown in Table 7. Amid this insecurity of the standards and the assessments, fewer high-poverty districts have begun testing (10.5 percent fewer). These districts are also more likely to evaluate teachers on reading and math scores, whether they teach those subjects or not (15.1 percent more say they do).

Table 7: Security in the standards and assessments		
	Low-poverty	High-poverty
Will probably not pull out of standards	41%	34.6%
Will definitely not pull out of standards	44.6%	34.6%
In PARCC or Smarter Balanced	93.8%	79.6%
In neither testing consortia	6.3%	20.4%

In the implementation of the new standards, respondents from high-poverty districts say they are less directly involved in community support and teacher evaluation. In community support, 16.2 percent fewer say they are directly involved, while 19.3 percent fewer report being directly involved in teacher evaluation. They also say their staff are less prepared than low-poverty districts to implement the new standards; 11.7 percent fewer say principals are very prepared, 13.5 percent fewer say other administrators are very prepared, 21.9 percent fewer say technology staff are very prepared, and 25.3 percent fewer say curriculum staff are very prepared.

While more respondents from high-poverty districts report receiving support from both federal and state than respondents from low-poverty districts (19.3 percent more say both, and 14.9 percent fewer say neither), the respondents from high-poverty districts still see less improvement in state support as they transition to the new standards. Of high-poverty districts, 10.6 percent fewer say state support for professional development has increased, and 10.4 percent more say their states have considered legislative proposals that would decrease state policy or funding support for the new standards

Respondents from higher poverty districts see less understanding in the community about the new standards and assessments than respondents from low-poverty districts. Respondents from higher poverty districts say the education community has less understanding of the relationship between the standards and assessments; 16.9 percent fewer agreed that there was a clear understanding, and 15.5 percent more disagreed that there was a clear understanding. Respondents from higher poverty districts are less actively involved in informing stakeholders; 12.7 percent fewer strongly agreed that their districts are actively informing stakeholders about the standards, and 10.4 percent fewer agreed that their districts are actively informing stakeholders about the assessments.

IV.   Conclusion

When given the space to write what would be most useful for their implementation of the new standards, the respondents overwhelmingly say they need more time and money. This clearly backs up the position AASA and other major education groups[4] have taken on the Common Core; slow down to get it right. While the standards and assessments are overwhelmingly seen to be more rigorous and better geared for college and career readiness than previous standards, major changes cannot happen overnight. Before requiring states to attach high stakes to the assessments, districts and schools should be given the time to properly implement the standards and ensure sufficient bandwidth and proper equipment for the assessments.

> "It is too much too fast. While the concept is good, the state needs to be better organized instead of dumping everything on districts at once."
> *Superintendent in South Dakota*

The new standards present an opportunity to address education inequities, as seen in the different responses from high-poverty districts, but they also present increased challenges for poor districts. These districts must be given the necessary state and federal funds to properly train teachers, identify and obtain necessary materials, and implement the online assessments.

About AASA

AASA, The School Superintendents Association, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders in the United States and throughout the world. AASA advocates for the highest quality public education for all students, and develops and supports school system leaders.

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[4] For example, Learning First Alliance, American Federation of Teachers, National School Boards Association

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Goals of RIS Schedule Redesign (November 2013):

- Effectively and efficiently utilize all personnel throughout the instructional day while maintaining existing programs offered to our students.
- Allow for a two-person flexible teaching block that capitalizes on our building design and honors the original vision for an intermediate learning environment.
- Increase the amount of time available for professional discussions and collaboration among certified staff.
- Incorporate time for state-mandated 20 minute daily recess.
- Allow for potential improvement in the delivery of advanced math instruction and gifted and talented services.
- Streamline the delivery of professional development for teachers of language arts and math.

Accomplishments of RIS Schedule Redesign (June 2014):

- Teaching blocks and times are balanced throughout the day in a developmentally appropriate manner (longer blocks in 5th, more broken up time in 6th).
- Fifth and sixth grade schedules allow for the same instructional experience, same hours of instruction per content area. Teachers will teach either reading and writing or math and science. All will teach social studies.
- Reading and language arts times have been increased at both grade levels to allow for full implementation of Readers Workshop school-wide.
- All previously offered courses have be maintained or enhanced with the exception of D.A.R.E. Drug and alcohol education will be delivered in health class through the collaboration of the health teacher and Reed S.R.O.
- Classroom time will be provided for students in each cluster once in a 6-day cycle and will allow for makeup time, extra help sessions and delivery of Second Step Lessons.
- Teachers will have a common planning period 5 times in a 6-day cycle which will be used as follows: content-based PLC meetings, a weekly collaboration with school counselors and special education teachers, SRBI meetings and (cluster) team planning time.
- Gifted education program, will be delivered during three specials periods that were previously called rotations and the missed content will be incorporated into the gifted program. This will eliminate the need for pulling students out of academic times.
- An enriched math class for identified students will be offered by two teachers on two different clusters at each grade level. Students will be heterogeneously mixed throughout other academic times but will be grouped for enriched math instruction.
- All students will have a 20-minute lunch and a 20-minute recess.
- Through multiple meetings with each and every certified teacher on staff, all have been fully briefed on the new schedule. The staff was presented with a final 14-15 schedule that they understood and supported before they left for their summer break.

Specials Detail:

13-14 Specials & Rotations	Grade	Frequency	14-15 Specials	Grade	Frequency	Net Gain/Loss
Physical Education	5,6	2xs/6-day cycle	Physical Education	5,6	2xs/Week	No Change
Art	5,6	1x/6-day cycle	Art	5,6	1x/Week	No Change
Music	5,6	2xs/6-day cycle	Music	5,6	2xs/week	No Change
Library	5,6	1x/6-day cycle	Library	5,6	1x/week	No Change
Computer	5,6	18xs/year	Computer	5,6	30xs/year	+ 6.5 hours
Health	5,6	18xs/year	Health	5,6	30xs/year	+ 6.5 hours
D.A.R.E.	5	18xs/year				Incl. in Health
21st Century Skills	6	18xs/year	21st Century Skills	6	30xs/year	+6.5 hours/year
			21st Century Skills	5	30xs/year	+ 20 hours/year
Instrument Lessons	5,6	18xs/year	Instrument Lessons	5,6	30xs/year	+ 6.5 hours/year
Project Adventure	5,6	18xs/year	Project Adventure	5,6	15xs/year	-3.0 hours/year
Special Art	5,6	18xs/year	Special Art	5,6	15xs/year	-3.0 hours/year
			Classroom Time	5,6	30xs/year	+ 6.5 hours/year

*Blue highlighted classes were formally known as rotations. They will not rotate in the new schedule.

Times	5 BLUE	5 GREEN	6 BLUE	6 GREEN
8:05-8:25	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom
	Instructional Block (120 min)	Special (40 min.)	Instructional Block (80 min.)	Instructional Block (40 min.)
		Instructional Block (120 min)		Special (40 min.)
			Special (40 min.)	Instructional Block (80 min.)
	Special (40 min.)		Instructional Block (80 min.)	
	Lunch (20 min.)	Recess (20 min.)		Special (40 min.)
	Recess (20 min.)	Lunch (20 min.)		
	Instructional Block (120 min)	Instructional Block (80 min.)	Special (40 min.)	Instructional Block (40 min.)
			Lunch (20 min.)	Recess (20 min.)
			Recess (20 min.)	Lunch (20 min.)
		Special (40 min.)	Instructional Block (80 min.)	Instructional Block (80 min.)
	Special (40 min.)	Instructional Block (40 min.)		
2:43-2:49	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom

Update: Pilot to Reconstitute Programming for Gifted Learners

Timeline

August:

Gifted teachers will meet and begin curriculum work. Additional members of the committee will be fielded (various staff membership). Committee will also work to finalize procedures and criteria under direction and supervision of Special Education Supervisor and Director of Pupil Services.

September:

New 4th grade students will be identified for programming.

Gifted teachers will integrate into classrooms where gifted students are scheduled to develop rapport and observe.

Gifted teachers will attend team meetings to consult and provide professional development (topics TBD).

Gifted teacher at the elementary level will conduct small group personalized learning opportunities to groups as designated by the grade level team.

Procedures/ criteria manual will be developed and presented to pupil service administrators for review.

NMS & RIS students will begin gifted classes.

October:

Elementary students will be identified and begin to meet in school groups and 1x weekly with their district peers.

Curriculum proposal will be presented to C&I Committee for consideration/ revisions.

Procedures/ Criteria brought in draft through Pupil Services.

Update: Pilot to Reconstitute Programming for Gifted Learners

December-

Curriculum, procedures, criteria and update will be presented to the BOE for final consideration.

January:

Mid-year review of program and updates

May/ June:

Request for BOE endorsement of final recommendations

Structure:

1.0 FTE will serve all four elementary schools and provide weekly home-school opportunities for personalized learning and extensions of current curriculum that will further differentiate and address the needs of gifted learners. One time per week all gifted learners from each elementary building will come together for approx. 1:30 arrival at RIS and would then proceed home on the RIS transportation. Cost of transportation approx. $50 per week.

2 (.4) FTE will serve RIS and NMS providing a separate classroom experience designed around gifted curriculum, personalized learning, student success plans and as additionally determined by the committee in the fall.

Population:

Program will serve approximately 25 students identified as gifted in each Grade 4-8.

NEWTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION
SUMMARY - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
2014/15 TO 2019/20

For Review from
the Committee meeting on 6/10/14

CIP Item #	Location	Description of Project	underway 2014/15	Year 1 2015/16	Year 2 2016/17	Year 3 2017/18	Year 4 2018/19	Year 5 2019/20	TOTALS
2	Hawley Elem.	HVAC Phase II Ventilation Improvements 1948 and 1997 sections		$4,500,000					
3	Hawley Elem.	HVAC Phase III Remove Steam Radiators & boiler & tie into ventilation 1921 section			$2,650,000				
8	Hawley Elem.	Roof replacement 1948 and 1997 sections				$800,000			$7,950,000
*	Sandy Hook Elem	Design, engineering & construction	($49,250,000)						-$49,250,000
9	Middle Gate Elem	Roof replacement 1964 and 1992 sections						$1,500,000	
6	Middle Gate Elem	Replace original 1964 boiler plant				$650,000			$2,150,000
5-4	Middle School	Phase 0 - Professional Services				$100,000			
5-4	Middle School	Phase I - New boilers and re-piping				$2,100,000			
7-6	Middle School	Phase II - Ventilation renovations					$4,805,000		$7,005,000
1	High School	Phase 0 - Professional Services	$100,000						
1	High School	Auditorium; ADA code, replace duct work, lighting, seating, rigging, fire sprinkler system	$2,200,000						
4	High School	Restoration of Roof with replacement of lobby roof			$1,040,000				$3,340,000
		TOTAL COSTS OF ALL PROJECTS	$51,550,000	$4,500,000	$3,690,000	$3,650,000	$4,805,000	$1,500,000	$69,695,000
		TOTAL TO BE BONDED	$2,300,000	$4,500,000	$3,690,000	$3,650,000	$4,805,000	$1,500,000	$20,445,000

Shading represents items new to the plan
*Funding provided by the State of Connecticut. This project will not be bonded locally and will not impact Newtown's budget or tax rate.

6/26/2014

Capital Improvement Project Requests

NEWTOWN HIGH SCHOOL – ROOFING
Total estimated project cost options:

- Option 1 : Cost $1,040,000
  Description- This option will allow restoration on almost the entire roof with the exception of the lobby section which requires replacement.
- Option 2 : Cost $3,500,000
  Description- This option will allow a complete replacement of the roof system.

HAWLEY SCHOOL – ROOFING
Total estimated project cost options:

- Option 1 : Cost $600,000
  Description- This option will allow restoration on the 1948 section and replacement of the 1997 section.
- Option 2 : Cost $ 800,000
  Description- This option will allow a complete replacement of the 1948 and 1997 sections of the facility.

MIDDLEGATE SCHOOL – ROOFING
Total estimated project cost options:

- Option 1 : Cost $250,000
  Description- This option will allow restoration on the 1964 section.
- Option 2 : Cost $ 1,500,000
  Description- This option will allow a complete replacement of the 1964 and 1992 sections of the facility.

MIDDLEGATE SCHOOL – BOILER REPLACEMENT
Total estimated project cost options:

- Replacement cost $ 650,000

  Description- This project would replace the original1964 boiler plant with higher efficiency natural gas fired boilers. Existing fin tube radiation would remain.

NEWTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT

FIVE YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)

APPROVED by the Board of Education on 11/12/2002
2003-2004 BOARD OF FINANCE CRITERIA PROJECTS

LOCATION	Priority	YEAR 1 2003/04	Priority	YEAR 2 2004/05	Priority	YEAR 3 2005/06	Priority	YEAR 4 2006/07	Priority	YEAR 5 2007/08	TOTAL	PRIORITY
*Internal estimate, needs to be developed by engineer closer to implementation. **Soft number.**												
REED INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL												
(None at this time)												
REED INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL TOTAL		0		0		0		0		0	0	
MIDDLE SCHOOL												
Engineering fees 10% & project mgt. 5%	3	107,000	4	45,000								Desirable
Make athletic field improvements			4	1,000,000								Desirable
Engineering fees 7% & project mgt. 5%					5	350,000	1	250,000				
Heating & ventilating "A wing"							1	4,300,000	"""			Needed
Add air-conditioning components							1	700,000	"""			Needed
Engineering fees 7% & project mgt. 5%							3	203,000	2	145,000		
Heating & ventilating "D wing"									2	2,600,000	"""	Needed
Add air-conditioning components									2	300,000	"""	Needed
Engineering fees 7% & project mgt. 5%									4	210,000		Needed
Heating & ventilating "B wing" - 2008-09												
Add air-conditioning components												
Engineering fees 7% & project mgt. 5%												
Heating & ventilating "C wing" - 2009-10												
Add air-conditioning components												
Large group area (auditorium/cafe expansion)												
MIDDLE SCHOOL TOTAL		107,000		1,045,000		350,000		5,453,000		3,255,000	10,210,000	
HIGH SCHOOL												
Renovations to create 4 classrooms	1	400,000										Urgent
Replace auditorium ceiling lighting, paint walls & ceiling			5	200,000								Desirable
Replace auditorium seating & flooring					4	250,000						Needed
Academy expense and renovation							2	T.B.D.				Needed
Athletic field bathrooms & field house									5	500,000	*	Desirable
Baseball & soccer field lighting												
HIGH SCHOOL TOTAL		400,000		200,000		250,000		0		500,000	1,350,000	

""Preliminary **order of magnitude** cost estimate.

*Internal estimate, needs to be developed by engineer closer to implementation. **Soft number.**

10/24/2013

CONNECTICUT INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITIES, INC.
SCHOOL BASED HEALTH CENTERS

"Healthy Kids Make Better Learners"

A key factor to success in life is a good education. School Based Health Centers (SBHCs) keep students healthy and in school so they can maximize their opportunities for learning.

School Based Health Centers are a model that works. The Centers integrate primary care with behavioral health services and in some cases, dental services. The SBHCs in Danbury are located within Broadview Middle School, Rogers Park Middle School, Danbury High School, and Henry Abbott Technical School (non-DPH funded). The SBHCs offer services to students from grades 6 to 12, and are provided by licensed nurse practitioners, physicians, physicians' assistants, licensed social workers, licensed professional counselors, dental hygienists, and dentists.

The SBHC is a resource for the schools and the community, and provides programs on wellness, disease prevention, health promotion, and health management.

During the 2013-2014 school year, the four Danbury SBHCs had more than 4,600 total patient visits for medical, behavioral, and dental services.

SBHC services include:
- Diagnosis/treatment of minor illnesses and injuries, including prescriptions
- Individual, group and family therapy
- Risk assessment and health education
- Management and treatment of chronic diseases
- Primary prevention/immunization
- Referral for medication evaluations and specialty care
- Support groups for anger management, bereavement, asthma, eating/weight issues

What are the benefits of SBHCs?
- Provide access to care at no out of pocket cost
- SBHCs keep students healthy and in school
- Early identification of physical and mental issues
- Students are served regardless of insurance status
- SBHCs reduce emergency room care

Students bring their issues to school. Asthma, tooth pain, domestic violence, illness and injuries, learning disabilities, peer conflict, diagnosed and undiagnosed mental conditions, and many more issues. SBHCs can help students and families.

Healthy students learn better. SBHCs offer barrier-free access to health care for medical, behavioral health, and dental needs. When students used the SBHCs, 98% stated the SBHC was able to help them with their health issue or problem. Also, 75% of students learned new health habits because of their visit(s).

CONNECTICUT INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITIES, INC.

Dr. Francis J. Muska, Ph.D.
Board Chair

Hon. James H. Maloney, Esq.
President & CEO

AVAILABILITY OF STATE DPH FUNDING TO ESTABLISH SBHC SERVICES

- Funding in the amount of $198,211 earmarked in State DPH Health FY 2014-15 Budget for establishment in a Newtown Public School

- Funding available July 1, 2014 – Continuous upon successful operation of clinic services

- The Connecticut Institute For Communities, Inc. who currently operates full service health centers in the City of Danbury's high school and two middle schools has been identified as the recipient of funds and lead agency for administering the program services.

- The proposed services will not replace existing nursing or social work services currently offered by the school system, but enhance the level of care available to the child with a goal of improving the child's health and wellbeing and reducing absenteeism due to unmet health issues.

- The SBHC will operate during the academic year, at minimum, and will include medical, behavioral, and oral health and health promotion/disease prevention education.

Minimum Primary care services to be provided will be the following:

1) **Primary health care** including:

    a. Physical exams/health assessments/screening for health problems
    b. Diagnosis and treatment of acute illness and injury
    c. Diagnosis and management of chronic illness
    d. Immunizations
    e. Health promotion and risk reduction
    f. Nutrition and weight management
    g. Laboratory tests
    h. Prescription and/or dispensing of medication for treatment

2) Referral and follow-up for specialty care that is beyond the scope of services in the SBHC

3) **Mental Health/Social Services** including:

a. Assessment, diagnosis and treatment of psychological, social and emotional problems
b. Crisis intervention
c. Individual, family and group counseling or referral for same if indicated
d. Substance abuse and HIV/AIDS prevention
e. Risk reduction and early intervention services
f. Outreach to students at risk
g. Support and/or psycho-educational groups focusing on topics of importance to the target population
h. Consultation to school staff and parents regarding issues of child and adolescent growth and development

4) **Referral and follow-up** for care that is beyond the scope of services provided in the SBHC

5) **Health Education Services**: Services will be supportive of existing health education activities conducted in the school and may include:

a. Consultation to school staff regarding issues of child and adolescent growth and development
b. School staff and parent training regarding issues of child and adolescent growth and development
c. School staff and parent training regarding issues of importance in target population
d. Individual and group health education
e. Classroom presentations

School System Responsibility**:

- Board of Education approval

- Dedicated and supportive school administrative leader

- Dedicated school nursing and social work staff

- Commitment of adequate space within the school building to house SBHC services including patient waiting area, medical office and mental health office

- Availability/sharing of student demographic data for grant proposal (i.e. population mix, % free & reduced lunch, absenteeism data, description of current support services, staffing needs, challenges, etc.)