

2013 Bridgeport Student Achievement Report: Opportunities and Challenges for our Schools



EXCEL BRIDGEPORT
Better Schools. Brighter Futures.

Contents

Executive Summary 2

PART I: INTRODUCTION

About Excel Bridgeport 4

About this report 5

Why do these results matter? 6

PART II: RESULTS

Summary of 2013 achievement 7

Achievement by school: Elementary and Middle... 8

Achievement by school: High School..... 9

Achievement by group..... 11

Achievement gains and successful approaches.... 13

PART III: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Changes in our schools last year..... 15

Changes underway this year..... 16

Recommendations 18

What can you do? 20

APPENDICES

Appendix A 21

Appendix B 22

References 24

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

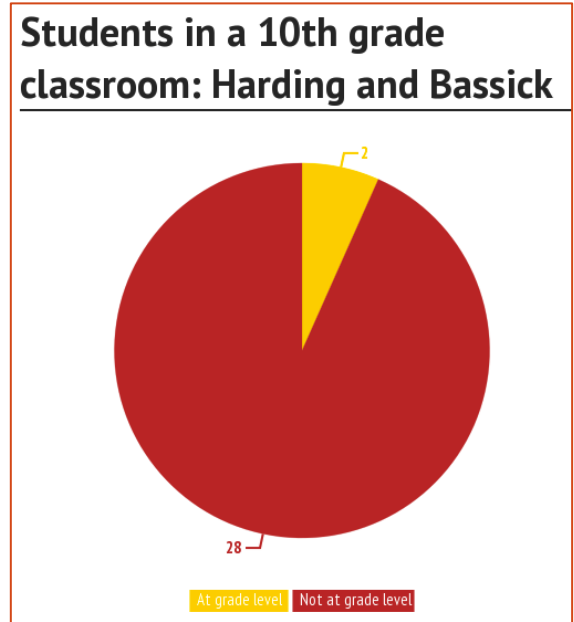
Excel Bridgeport is building a movement of parents, students, and other community members to advocate for excellent schools.

We believe that going to college and having successful careers should be the *expectation* and not the exception for Bridgeport children. To get there, we need to focus on **1) Achievement, 2) Good Governance, 3) Effective Leadership, & 4) Community Empowerment**

This report provides a summary of 2013 student achievement data, in order to equip parents and community members to be informed advocates and suggest strategies for moving forward. We know that these scores matter in determining future success in school and in life, particularly in third and tenth grades.

This year’s results demonstrate that large-scale change in Bridgeport schools is imperative:

- **No school in Bridgeport met our standard for high quality (an average of 80% of students meeting grade level goals): The percent of students at grade level ranged between schools from 6% to 79%.**
- **At the lowest performing schools just 4 or 5 students in each elementary school classroom and 2 in each high school classroom meet grade level goals.**

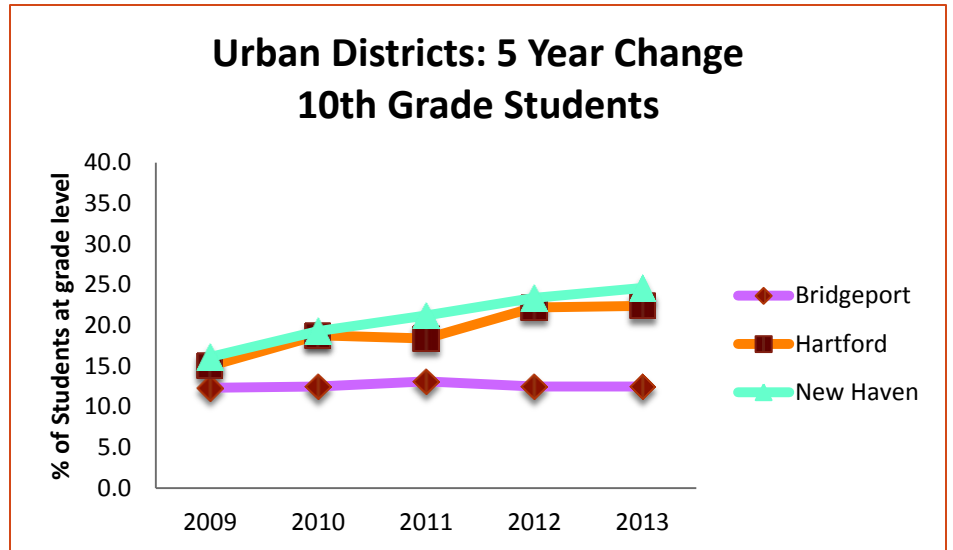


Bridgeport schools should support all students. Most Black and Latino students, and students who require extra support to succeed, are not meeting grade level goals.



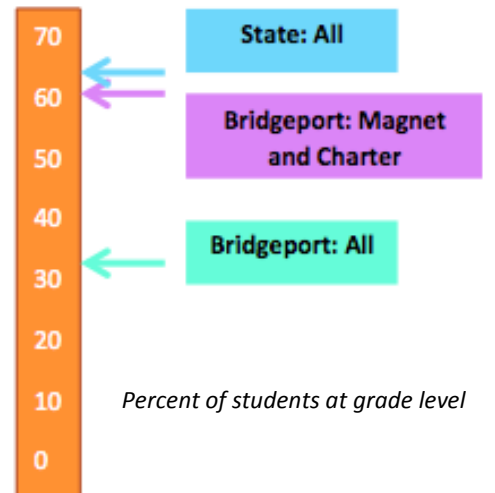
- **Just 1 of 10 Black or Latino high school students meets grade level goals.**
- **Bridgeport Special Education students and English Language Learners are not getting the education they deserve. Only 7% in each group met grade level goals and in elementary-middle school – and even fewer did in high school.**

The gap between Bridgeport students and their peers statewide persists while other urban districts demonstrate that improvement is possible.



Great schools and school transformation can dramatically improve opportunities for students.

- Bridgeport students excel under innovative models and schools of choice, where Bridgeport students perform at similar levels to schools across the state.
- Schools that underwent intensive change through resources from the “Commissioner’s Network” showed promise in their first year.



Recommendations

The data suggests we focus on:

1) Achievement

- Support the groups of students that need it most: English Language Learners, Special Education students, and Black and Latino students.
- Support improvement with targeted interventions in grades that make a big difference in future success: early learning (PK-3rd) and 9th grade.

2) Good Governance

- Match district support to school needs, holding schools accountable while allowing strong schools the flexibility to innovate.

3) Effective Leadership

- Create real change in our schools with strong implementation of new policies and plans at the district and classroom level.

4) Community Empowerment

- Expand access to high quality schools based on parent and community input.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

About Excel Bridgeport

Who are we?

Excel Bridgeport is building a movement of parents, students, and other community members to advocate for excellent schools that prepare Bridgeport students for college, career, and life.



We prepare students, parents, and the community to lead change in our school system by educating these groups on key issues in education, training community members in advocacy and organizing, and providing information on the progress of our district.

What is our vision?

Our vision is that going to college and having successful careers will be the expectation and not the exception for Bridgeport children. Parents will have excellent school options and students will be engaged in learning that prepares them for success in the 21st century. To get there we believe we need to focus on:

- **Achievement:** Bridgeport needs more high quality schools that set high expectations and prepare students for success. Bridgeport must focus on improving student learning outcomes in specific areas and on using various resources and strategies to realize those goals.
- **Good Governance:** The Bridgeport Board of Education should prioritize students' needs and make decisions that are in the best interest of students. They should have the skills, experience, and commitment to students required to run the school system.
- **Effective Leadership:** We must have strong district leadership, school leadership, and teachers driven by a vision of student achievement. Leaders should be held accountable for the performance of our schools and should be supported with the resources they need to be effective.
- **Community Empowerment:** Parents and students must be active in shaping the future of our schools and demanding better. They should be knowledgeable and skilled change agents who both lead improvement efforts and hold school, district, and city leadership accountable.

About this report

Report goals

By sharing highlights of the 2013 CMT and CAPT exam results, this report aims to:

- Inform parents and the Bridgeport community about the state of our schools
- Equip parents, students, community leaders, and other Bridgeport residents with the information they need to advocate for change
- Suggest strategies for moving forward
- Introduce and provide information on upcoming changes in our schools



What are the CMT and CAPT exams?

- The Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) are statewide, standardized tests administered to students in grades 3-8 (CMT) and 10 (CAPT).
- All grades are tested every year in math, reading, and writing and 5th, 8th, and 10th graders are also tested in science.

What is the purpose of the exams?

The purpose of the tests is to find out how students are doing compared to the expectations the state set for each grade level. The state sets these expectations and assesses students through tests in order to find out how well school districts and individual schools are helping students learn, and to identify students who need more support than they are getting¹.

What do the results mean?

The Connecticut Department of Education provides the test results by reporting the percent of students at each school who meet expectations for their grade, based on how they did on the exam². Students are grouped into 5 levels: Advanced, Goal, Proficient, Basic, and Below Basic.

Throughout this report we examine the number of students at or above the “Goal” level on average³ because the “Goal” level represents the standard for grade level expectations. We believe in high standards for students and want to know how well schools are doing in preparing students to succeed at their grade level.

¹ CT State Department of Education, 2013: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2748&Q=334726>

² Test scores can be found at the following websites: www.cmtreports.com; www.captreports.com

³ The state of Connecticut reports the percent of students meeting grade level goals by subject in each grade level. In order to provide one number that summarizes results across grade levels and subjects for a school or district, we calculate a weighted average percent that takes into account the number of students taking each subject test in each grade. See Appendix B.

Why do these results matter?

Test scores are only one measure of how students are doing and do not provide a full picture. In the schools where test scores are the lowest there are excellent teachers and students who excel. However, analyzing test scores is helpful in pointing to schools and groups of students that need more support and resources and highlighting great schools that can serve as models for the city. The problems these numbers reveal have devastating consequences for students and for Bridgeport:



- **Students who don't meet grade level goals in third grade often do not catch up.** When students aren't able to read at grade level by third grade, they begin to have trouble succeeding in their work in all subjects. Students who are below grade level in third grade reading are less likely to graduate from high school and attend college.⁴
- **Students who do not finish high school are more likely to be unemployed and earn less money.** In 2008-09, the joblessness rate for high school dropouts was 54%. In fact, 31% of young people without a high school diploma lived in poverty. In addition to consequences for young people and their families, this has economic consequences for our city through lower tax revenue and increases in costs for incarceration and public assistance⁵.
- **Students who do not finish high school are also at greater risk for involvement with the criminal justice system.** Though just 11% of adults in Connecticut lack a high school diploma or GED, 76% of incarcerated people did not complete high school⁶.
- **Even for students who complete high school, many leave unprepared for college.** From the class of 2004, only 15% of Bridgeport high school graduates completed a 2-or 4-year degree 6 years after finishing high school, compared with 41% of graduates across the state. At Bassick this rate is only 7% of the graduating class – about 1 in 14 graduating students⁷.

⁴ Chapin Hall, 2010: http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/Reading_on_Grade_Level_111710.pdf.

⁵ Northeastern University, 2009: http://iris.lib.neu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1022&context=clms_pub ; McKinsey & Company, 2009: <http://mckinseysociety.com/the-economic-impact-of-the-achievement-gap-in-americas-schools/>.

⁶ Connecticut Dept of Correction, 2012: <http://www.ct.gov/doc/lib/doc/PDF/PDFReport/annualreport2012.pdf>

⁷ Connecticut State Board of Regents, 2011: <http://www.ct.edu/initiatives/p20#WorkshopHighSchool>

PART II: RESULTS

Summary of 2013 achievement

This year's results demonstrate that large-scale change in Bridgeport schools is imperative.

- Looking across all tests and grades, just **33%** of elementary-middle school students and **12%** of high school students score at grade level on average.
- Even fewer students meet grade level goals in all subjects tested: **16%** of elementary and middle school students and **3%** of 10th graders – just **29** high school students across the district.
- Black and Latino students as well as ELL and Special Education students are not performing as well on tests as White and Asian students on tests.

We are not preparing our students to succeed, though we know that Bridgeport students can achieve at high levels.

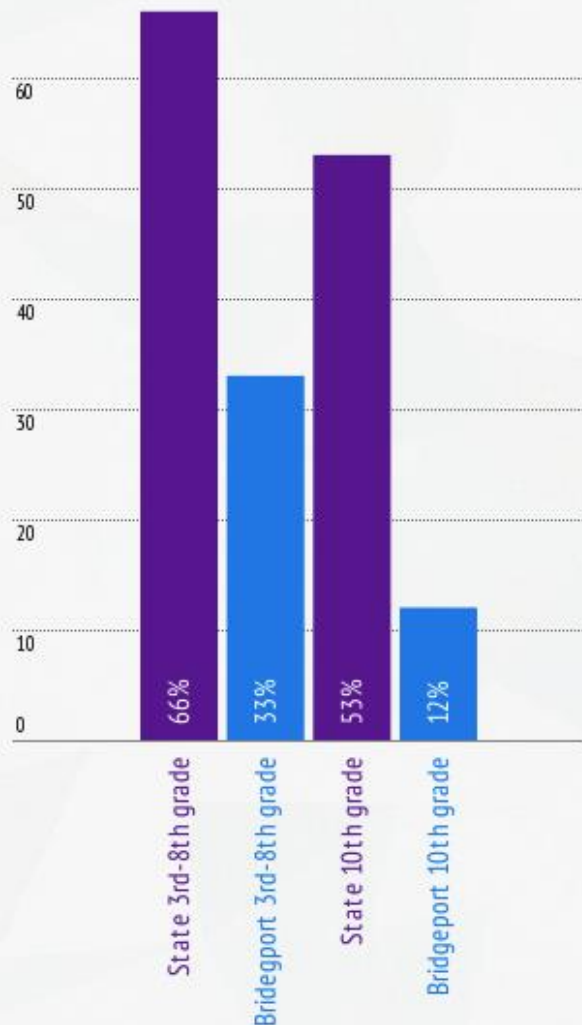
- The gap between Bridgeport students and their peers statewide persists while Hartford and New Haven demonstrate that improvement is possible.

Great schools and school transformation can dramatically improve opportunities for students.

- Bridgeport students excel under innovative models and schools of choice, where Bridgeport students perform at similar levels to schools across the state.
- Schools that underwent intensive change and focused on meeting student needs through resources from the Commissioner's Network showed promise in their first year.

"There are great minds in the building; we just need to cultivate those minds. They can be just as successful as anyone, anywhere."
-Virginia Hudson-Johnson, Dunbar Teacher

Students at grade level (%)



Achievement by school: Elementary and Middle School

Almost all schools scored below the state average of 66% of students at grade level and CMT scores declined overall. However, some Bridgeport schools demonstrated what is possible: scores improved at 7 schools and 2 scored higher than the state average.

- No school in Bridgeport met our standard for high quality of at least 80% of students meeting grade level goals on average. The percent of students at grade level ranged between schools from 14%-79%.
- At the lowest performing schools about one of every seven students meets grade level goals on average, just 4-5 students per class.
- Few students meet goals in all subjects tested. No 3rd graders at Bryant, Columbus, or Cross met grade level goals in all subjects.

The table below divides schools into four groups based on the average percent of students who scored at goal level on CMT tests at that school, with schools on the left scoring the highest in the district and schools on the right most in need of change. Schools listed in purple improved their test scores this year: Park City Magnet, Bridge Academy, and Hallen improved the most.

SUCCESS TO BUILD ON (45%-79% at goal)	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (31%-44% at goal)	PRIORITY (24%-30% at goal)	URGENT (14%-23% at goal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multicultural: 79% ▪ Park City Magnet: 71% ▪ High Horizons: 64% ▪ Achievement First: 60% ▪ Discovery: 59% ▪ Winthrop: 56% ▪ Park City Prep: 55% ▪ New Beginnings: 47% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Classical Studies: 44% ▪ Madison: 43% ▪ Black Rock: 38% ▪ Bridge Academy: 37% ▪ Hooker: 35% ▪ Hallen: 34% ▪ Blackham: 33% ▪ Edison: 31% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hall: 29% ▪ Waltersville: 28% ▪ Cross: 27% ▪ Beardsley: 27% ▪ Tisdale: 27% ▪ Read: 25% ▪ Johnson: 25% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Barnum: 24% ▪ Curiale: 21% ▪ Cesar Batalla: 21% ▪ Columbus: 16% ▪ Roosevelt: 16% ▪ Bryant: 15% ▪ Luis Munoz Marin: 15% ▪ Dunbar: 14%



Achievement by school: High School

At the high school level, all Bridgeport high schools are failing to adequately prepare students for college, career and life.

- **With only 12% of students performing at grade level, 10th grade** represents the widest gap between Bridgeport and the state in meeting grade level goals – a difference of 40 percentage points.
- **Only 29 tenth grade students across the entire district met grade level goals in all four subjects.**
- **Even at the strongest high schools much improvement is needed**—at Central High School and Bridge Academy fewer than 20% of students score at grade level on average.

The table below presents the percent and number of students at grade level (on average across subjects) for Bridgeport high schools and the district and state overall.

	% Students meeting grade level goals (2013)	# Students meeting grade level goals (2013)	Percentage point change from 2012
State	53%	20836	+1.2%
Bridgeport	12%	105	-0.1%
Bridge Academy	19%	8	+4%
Central High School	18%	80	+0.7%
Harding High School	7%	11	-2.8%
Bassick High School	6%	13	+1%

Far too many Bridgeport students do not complete high school. While graduation rates improved this year, Bridgeport is still far behind the state.

66% of Bridgeport students graduate from high school in four years, compared to 85% across the state. That means that in a classroom of 30 students, 10 who start 9th grade will not finish. For some groups, making it to graduation in four years is even harder: only 59% of Latino students and 47% of special education students graduate on time.

There are also big differences across Bridgeport’s three high schools: While 78% of students at Central High School graduate, only 66% graduate at Harding, and **fewer than half of students – 48% graduate from Bassick.**



Given that only 12% of 10th graders meet grade level goals, many graduating students are not being prepared for college and careers. Among Bridgeport graduates, few earn degrees six years after high school (see page 4).

Students in a 10th grade classroom: Harding and Bassick

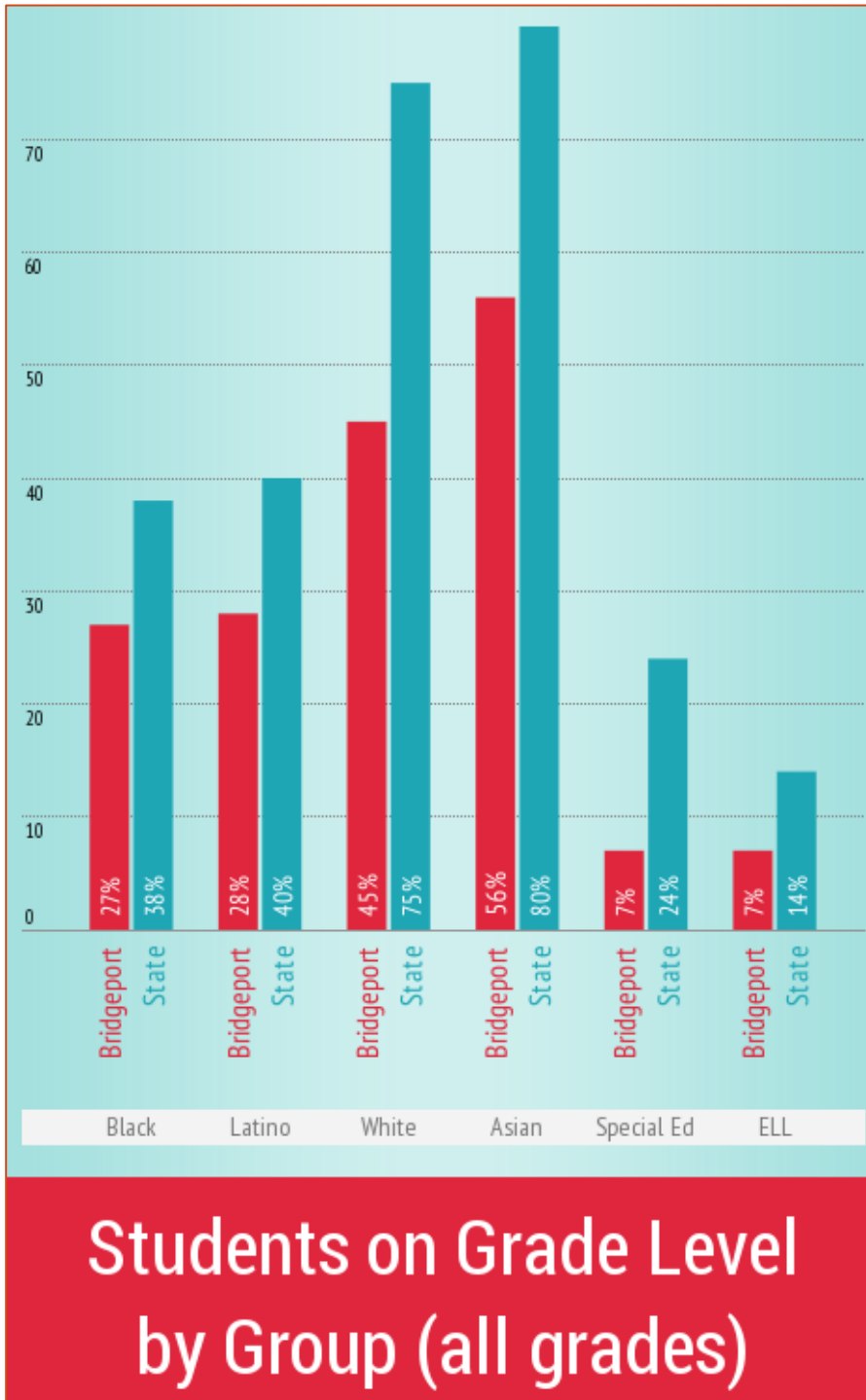


The need for change is urgent at Bridgeport’s lowest performing high schools where few students meet grade level goals.

At two Bridgeport high schools, Harding and Bassick, **less than 15 10th grade students in the entire school (about 6%) meet grade level goals on average, about 2 students per class.**

Achievement by group: Student groups that need extra attention

This year’s results show that not all groups of students in Bridgeport are achieving at the same level. Most Black and Latino students and students who require extra resources or programs to succeed are not meeting grade level goals.



“At High Horizons, they work with each kid in the areas they need help – they want to bring everyone up to the same level. The principal is data driven and uses this to identify children who need extra help.”
 -John Wilkins, Parent of High Horizons alum

Large gaps in scores exist between White/Asian students and their Black/Latino peers in Bridgeport and across the state. Schools must do more to support all students. However, some Bridgeport schools prove what is possible, as a High Horizons parent explains above.

Just 1 of 10 Black or Latino high school students and 3 of 10 Black or Latino elementary/middle school students meets grade level goals, compared to 1 in 4 White high school students and nearly half of White elementary-middle school students.

- Bridgeport Special Education students are not getting the education they deserve. **Only one high school student in Bridgeport Special Education met grade level goals and only 7% did in elementary and middle school – about 2 students in a class of 30.**
- English Language Learners in Bridgeport also need more support – **only a handful of high school ELL students met grade level goals and 7% did in elementary-middle school – about 2 students in a class of 30.**



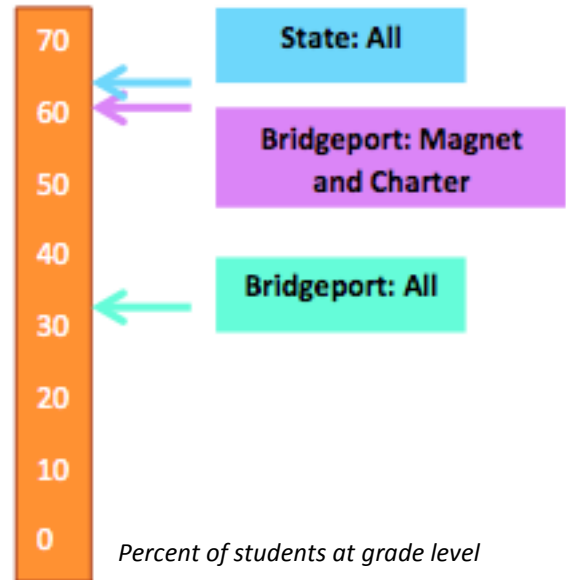
This year's results showed differences across grades and subjects that suggest areas for focus and targeted interventions in areas we know matter for future success: early learning, 9th grade, math and reading.

- **Just 26% of 3rd graders are on grade level – the lowest rate of any elementary or middle school grade.**
- **Just 12% of 10th grade students meet grade level goals – the lowest percentage of any grade level tested.** This represents the widest gap between Bridgeport students and the state overall – a difference of over 40 percentage points.
- **Since last year, the biggest drop in elementary school students meeting grade level goals was in math – from 36% to 31% of students.** Across elementary and middle school grades, fewer students meet grade level goals in science than in any other subject.
- **In high school fewer students meet grade level goals in reading than in any other subject.** Only 9% perform at goal in reading, whereas about 20% meet writing goals.

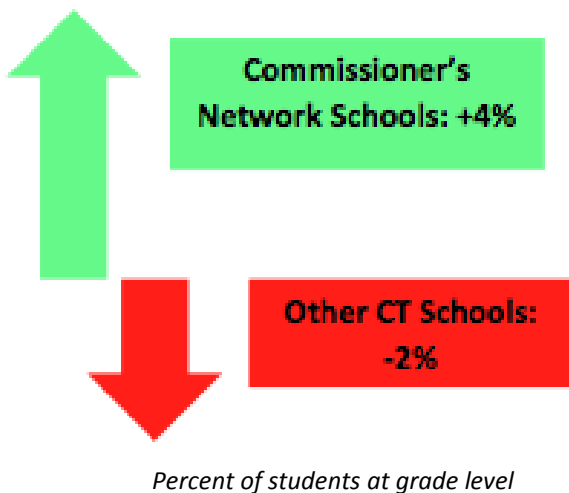
Achievement gains and successful approaches

Bridgeport students can achieve at the same level as students across the state. Students are excelling under innovative school models and schools of choice.

- **The gap between students at goal in Bridgeport schools and the state overall nearly disappears if Bridgeport magnet and charter school CMT scores are compared to the state.**
- At some great schools in Bridgeport, low-income, Latino and Black students are excelling.
 - At Bridgeport’s highest performing school, Multicultural Magnet, 79% of students score at grade level, nearly 15 percentage points higher than the state average. The vast majority of students at this school are from low-income families, and their academic performance far exceeds the state average of 43% of low-income students at grade level.
 - At Achievement First Bridgeport Academy, located in the city’s East Side neighborhood, 60% of Latino and Black students meet grade level goals, compared to 40% of Black and Latino students statewide. At Marin School, located in the same neighborhood, only 15% of students meet grade level goals on average.

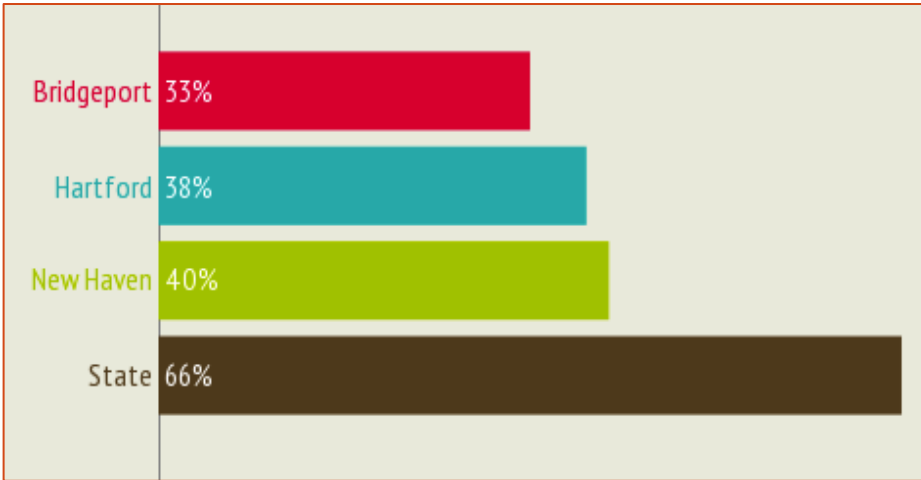


Schools that receive the support they need to transform can improve.



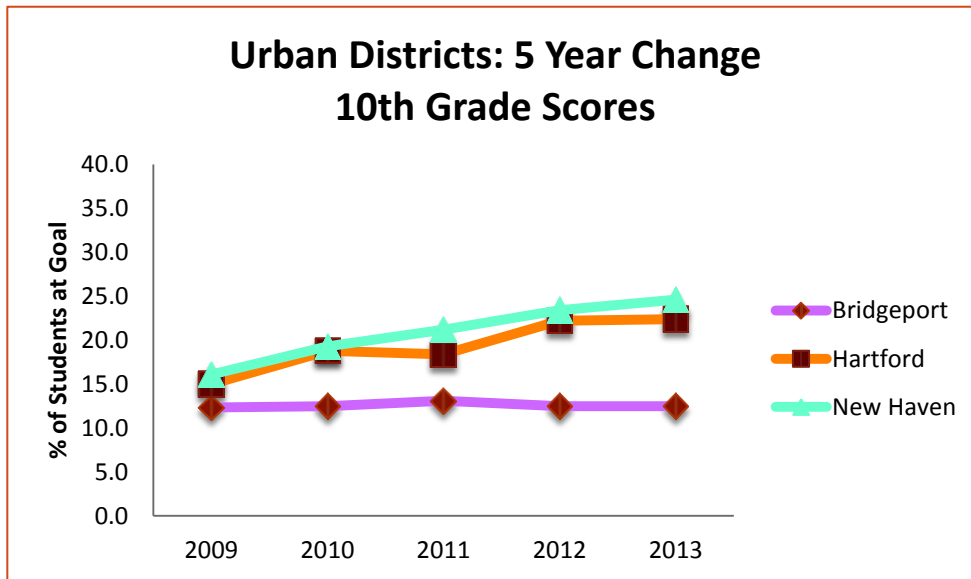
In a year in which test scores declined across the state and in most Bridgeport schools, two of the four schools selected to receive extra resources and support through the state Commissioner’s Network saw large gains in CMT scores— FUSE/Jumoke Academy at Milner in Hartford and High School in the Community in New Haven. Bridgeport’s Curiale School improved in some grades, maintaining the same percent of students on grade level overall.

While excellent schools in Bridgeport and other urban districts demonstrate that improvement is possible, most Bridgeport schools remain behind.



Scores on the CMT among 3rd through 8th graders dropped this year across the state, including in New Haven, Hartford and Bridgeport. Though these cities face similar challenges to Bridgeport, students in these cities are performing better than students in Bridgeport.

On the CAPT exam, while 10th graders in Hartford and New Haven have made small and steady gains since 2009, both nearing 25% of students at goal, Bridgeport scores have stayed flat. As a result, the gap between Bridgeport high schools and those in other cities and the state has grown.



PART III: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Beyond the numbers: Changes in our schools last year

Some changes took place that may have affected how much students learned and their test scores⁸.

Schools implemented a new curriculum that aligns with the Common Core Standards, new state and national goals for what students should learn in each grade (see next page).

Designed with the help of Bridgeport teachers, the curriculum aims to help students understand concepts in depth and build the analysis and interpretation skills that prepare them for success as they advance⁹.

- **While the curriculum changed this year, the CMT and CAPT tests did not.** Test performance was low prior to this change, but part of the reason students across the state scored lower this year may be because the old test does not align with the new curriculum¹⁰.

Bridgeport students lost over two weeks of instructional time due to major storms, including time shortly before taking exams because of Winter Storm Nemo. Students had less time to learn and apply concepts, as well as extra breaks, where students can lose ground. While Bridgeport's schools were failing students long before the storm, the loss of school time may have influenced test performance last year.

"The new curriculum is the biggest change. It challenges my girls more, it actually works their brain, has them thinking."

-Tonya Whitley, Curiale PAC President

Curiale began transforming to better serve students with extra support and resources from the state Commissioner's Network.

Curiale was one of the first 4 schools across Connecticut to join the Commissioner's Network, a group of schools selected to implement innovative educational models that create dramatic change. Changes are just beginning, but already three grades showed improved test scores. This year Curiale:

- Hired a new principal and assistant principal.
- Extended the school day and year, and re-organized the daily schedule to provide longer blocks of learning time.
- Piloted an improved system for providing individualized student support.
- Hired a parent coordinator to launch efforts to boost parent involvement.

According to Curiale PAC President Tonya Whitley, ***"When you go in there, you feel the environment is different. You feel welcome... There's a lot more structure. It's harder but the kids are learning more."***

⁸ Commissioner's Network Mid-Year Operations and Instructional Audit, 2012 (see Curiale textbox)

⁹ Connecticut Post, 2012: <http://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Bridgeport-schools-curriculum-gets-overhaul-3691798.php>

¹⁰ Connecticut Post, 2013: <http://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Test-results-vary-by-district-4729325.php>

Changes underway this year

Some important changes are underway this year that we think will help schools improve and support students' access to great schools. Many of these changes address key issues highlighted by test score data – a need to better support high school students, provide resources for struggling schools, and hold schools and students to high standards.



1. Possible Expansion of the Commissioner's

Network: The group of schools selected by the state to receive extra support, resources, and flexibility to make big changes to schools is likely to continue to grow.

- Dunbar joined the Commissioner's Network and selected Family Urban Schools of Excellence (FUSE), which operates successful Hartford schools, to run Dunbar.
- The district may apply for other Bridgeport schools to enter the Network in 2014-15.
- If additional schools are selected, parents will have opportunities to provide ideas and feedback on the direction of change. Excel Bridgeport will continue to provide information to make sure parents' voices are heard in these decisions.

"It's been a beautiful thing to see. I witnessed every scholar coming in, being greeted and shaking hands with a staff member – gives them the message, you're important, you're here for a purpose, we want to help you be successful. First and foremost, the focus is on changing the climate and culture of the school – making the expectations clear – once that's happened everything else will follow."
-Virginia Hudson-Johnson, Dunbar Teacher

"Here the focus is more on learning and actually understanding, not just the grade."

-Joshua, Bridgeport 10th grader at Fairchild Wheeler Interdistrict Magnet

2. Common Core Standards: The new curriculum Bridgeport began using last year was designed to fit with new state and national standards called the Common Core Standards.

- The Common Core Standards set new goals for what students should know at each grade level, emphasizing problem solving, analysis, and critical-thinking. National educators and policymakers created these standards to align to the demands of our modern economy and help students thrive in college and today's professional world.
- Forty-five states, including Connecticut, have adopted the Common Core and are beginning to use it in the classroom and to measure the results through new state tests¹¹.

¹¹ Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2013: <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions>; U.S. Department of Education, 2013: <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/duncan-pushes-back-attacks-common-core-standards>



3. District-Wide Strategy for Supporting Schools:

Last April, Bridgeport's Board of Education voted to adopt a new strategy for working across the district to make sure schools are meeting students' needs. This strategy (called a "portfolio strategy" or the "portfolio model") is already used in districts like Hartford, New Haven, and New York. A portfolio strategy helps each school improve by tailoring the support the district provides to the needs of the school. The district:

"Schools say they try to get you ready for the real world and college, but this school actually does."

-Joshua, Bridgeport 10th grader at Fairchild Wheeler Interdistrict Magnet

- Works closely with the lowest performing schools to make large whole-school changes.
- Helps schools in the middle get to a higher level.
- Takes a hands-off approach with schools already doing a great job so they can continue their work and have flexibility to decide how to meet student needs¹².

4. New high schools: High school options expanded dramatically with 5 new schools.

"The diversity here is great, having students from different places."

-Jacqueline, Bridgeport 10th grader at Fairchild Wheeler Interdistrict Magnet

- Three new magnet schools opened in a new state-of-the-art facility, each part of Fairchild Wheeler Interdistrict Magnet Campus and each with a distinct science and technology focus: 1) information technology and software engineering; 2) zoological science, research, and biotechnology; and 3) physical sciences, engineering, and aerospace/hydrospace.
- The Bridgeport Military and First Responders Academy opened this year to prepare students for public safety careers while offering strong academics.
- Pride Academy also opened this fall. It is an alternative middle school and high school that serves students most in need of additional support.

¹² Bridgeport Public Schools, 2013; Center for Reinventing Public Education, 2011-2013: <http://www.crpe.org/portfolio>

Recommendations for moving forward

This year's numbers make clear that students need greater access to high quality schools and suggest areas of focus within each of Excel Bridgeport's four pillars of education change.

Focus on Achievement

Make sure all students have the opportunity to achieve at high levels by focusing support on the groups of students that need it most: English Language Learners, Special Education students, and Black and Latino students. The data suggests attention to:

"Here, all teachers have a goal for each and every student. Before, if I got a C or a B, I would think, 'oh that's fine.' Here, they give you a goal – makes us feel committed to learn."

-Sabrina, Bridgeport 10th grader at Fairchild Wheeler Interdistrict Magnet

- Improving programs for English Language Learners and Special Education students. These students are far behind others in Bridgeport and students in these groups across the state.
- Closing the gap between White students and Black and Latino students.



Support improvement with targeted interventions in grades that make a big difference in future success: early learning and 9th grade.

"I feel like the teachers here care about you being successful. If you're not successful, they're not successful."

-Brandon, Bridgeport 10th grader at Fairchild Wheeler Interdistrict Magnet

- Students who don't meet grade level goals in third grade often do not catch up¹³. Yet in Bridgeport, only 26% of third graders are performing at grade level.
- Success in 9th grade is critical, as students who get off track during their first year in high school are much less likely to graduate¹⁴. Yet scores in 10th grade are lower than in any other tested K-12 grade. Almost 90% of Bridgeport's 10th graders are **not** on grade level.

¹³ Chapin Hall, 2010: http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/Reading_on_Grade_Level_111710.pdf.

¹⁴ The Future of Children: Princeton University and Brookings, 2009:

<http://futureofchildren.org/publications/journals/article/index.xml?journalid=30&articleid=38§ionid=81&submit>

Good Governance

Differentiate support and resources to schools based on their specific needs. Some Bridgeport schools need to make big changes, while others are already on a path toward success. Because each school has specific strengths and challenges as well as unique students, the district should match support to school needs, holding schools accountable for student learning while allowing strong schools the flexibility to innovate.



“Teachers here give you every opportunity to learn and the tools you need – they get you extra help and stay after if you need it – but they don’t hold your hand, they teach you to do it for yourself.”

-Daire, 9th grader at Fairchild Wheeler Interdistrict Magnet

Effective Leadership

Create real change in our schools with strong implementation of new policies and plans. When big changes take place, such as our new curriculum or school transformation, school and district leadership must provide the ongoing support teachers, parents, and students need to make those changes well and to continue to improve. Parents must help hold the district accountable for fulfilling its promises and fully supporting initiatives that directly impact Bridgeport students.

Community Empowerment

Expand access to high quality schools based on parent and community input. The district will have to employ multiple strategies to both improve the schools we have and create strong new schools based on community demand. The portfolio model, the new curriculum, and the Commissioner’s Network are all opportunities to do this. To use these tools to make choices that are best for students, parents need a strong voice at the table.

“I felt like parents had a voice, amazingly so. The principal really listened to ideas of the PAC; she tried to engage as many parents as possible.”

-John Wilkins, Parent of High Horizons Alum

What can you do?

Collective action and leadership is needed to transform our schools into ones where all students complete high school prepared for success in college, career and life. Parents know what their children need to be successful, young people are experts on their schools, and community leaders can mobilize Bridgeport residents to take action.



Here are some ways to get involved:

Action Steps: Everyone

- Get informed on issues in our schools. Sign up for Excel Bridgeport updates and follow us on Twitter and Facebook: <http://www.excelbridgeport.org/take-action/get-involved/>
- Attend Bridgeport Board of Education meetings and other district events. A calendar can be found here: <http://www.excelbridgeport.org/news-and-events/events/>
- Make your voice heard by signing up to give public comment at Board of Education meetings.
- Get in touch with BOE members to tell them what you think. Contact information can be found here: <http://www.bridgeportedu.com/Board/docs/2012-2013/BoardMemberList 2012-2013 5-29-13.pdf>
- Write a letter to the editor or share your thoughts on education on Facebook and Twitter.
- Share this report with your family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors!

Parents	Students	Community Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VOTE in the Board of Education elections and in all other local races. Your vote can make a big difference in the future of our schools. To register to vote, visit: City Hall Annex, 1st Floor, 999 Broad St Bridgeport, CT; (203) 576-7281 or http://www.ct.gov/sots/LIB/sots/ElectionServices/ElectForms/electforms/ed671.pdf. ▪ Participate in Excel Bridgeport’s parent leadership programs. To get involved, contact: info@excelbridgeport.org ▪ Join your school’s Parent Advisory Council (PAC) or School Governance Council (SGC). Talk to your child’s principal about getting involved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate in student government to have a say in school decisions or form a leadership group. ▪ Register to vote once you turn 18. See information at left. ▪ Participate in Excel Bridgeport’s youth programs and events like the Youth Organizing Leadership Academy (YOLA). To get involved, email: info@excelbridgeport.org. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convene community conversations to discuss issues in our schools and how to address the achievement gap. ▪ Speak out: Talk to other community leaders and organizations, contact your city councilperson, inform your congregation.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Students Meeting Grade Level Goals in all Subjects

School (grades 3-8)	At goal: All tests Grade 3 (#students)	At goal: All tests Grade 3 (%students)
Multicultural Magnet	35	68.6%
State	16174	41.9%
High Horizons	19	40.4%
Discovery Magnet	17	37.8%
New Beginnings	14	33.3%
Madison	24	32.9%
Park City Magnet	15	28.8%
Read	16	18.6%
Black Rock	6	16.7%
Winthrop	11	15.3%
Bridgeport	206	12.4%
Johnson	10	12.3%
Classical Studies	6	12%
Hooker	4	10.3%
Curiale	6	10.3%
Blackham	11	10%
Hallen	4	8.7%
Hall	4	8%
Beardsley	3	5.9%
Cesar Batalla	5	4.5%
Roosevelt	2	4.1%
Edison	1	3.4%
Dunbar	1	3.4%
Waltersville	2	2.9%
Barnum	2	2.9%
Tisdale	1	1.4%
Luis Munoz Marin	1	1.2%
Cross	0	0%
Columbus	0	0%
Bryant	0	0%
Achv First Bridgeport	No data*	
Park City Prep	No data*	
The Bridge Academy	No data*	

This report focuses on how many and what percent of students score at goal on average, but another important measure is the number of students meeting grade level goals in all subjects tested (see Appendix B for more information).

Few students achieve at goal in all subjects, particularly in 3rd and 10th grade, key years for future success:

- **At half of elementary-middle (K-8) schools, fewer than 5 third graders score at goal in all subjects, including 3 schools with no third graders at goal in all subjects.**
- **Only 3% of 10th graders score at goal in all subjects, less than 30 students in the district overall, and almost all from Central High School and no students from Bridge Academy.**

School	At goal: All tests Grade 10 (#students)	At goal: All tests Grade 10 (%students)
State	12996	32.1
Central	24	5.2
Bridgeport	29	3.1
Bassick	1	0.4
Central	24	5.2
Harding	4	1.9
Bridge	0	0

*No 3rd grade data is available for these schools. Park City Prep and Bridge Academy do not have 3rd grades. Achievement First opened in 2010 and did not have a 3rd grade in 2012-13 – their first 3rd grade class will begin in 2013-2014.

Appendix B: Methodology

Use of “Goal” level in analysis

The Connecticut Department of Education groups students into 5 levels based on CMT or CAPT scores: Advanced, Goal, Proficient, Basic, and Below Basic. Excel Bridgeport believes that Bridgeport students should be held to the high standards they will encounter in college and the workplace. For that reason, we analyze CMT and CAPT scores at “Goal” level because this represents Connecticut’s standard for grade level expectations.

Students performing at goal on the CMT exam demonstrate a “consistent ability” to perform as expected for their grade and have “extensive knowledge of grade level content,” representing a “challenging, yet reasonable” expectation for Connecticut students¹⁵. On the CAPT exam, the “Goal” level indicates that these students “possess the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities expected” as these students prepare for college and the workforce¹⁶. Therefore, the percent of students at or above the “Goal” level at a given school suggests how well that school is doing in preparing students to succeed at their grade level.

Calculating the average percent of students at goal

The state of Connecticut reports the percent of students meeting grade level goals by subject in each grade level. In order to provide one number that summarizes results across grade levels and subjects for a school or district, we calculate a weighted average percent that takes into account the number of students taking each subject test in each grade.

We found these weighted averages by multiplying the number of students tested in each grade and each subject area by the percent of students scoring at goal in that subject. We then sum the results of this multiplication and divide this by the total number of test takers in all subjects. These calculations produce a weighted value of all assessments for that grade level. All grade levels in the school are then weighted in this way. We then multiply these grade level averages by the total number of tests taken in that grade, add these up across all grades tested, and divide this number by the total number of tests taken at the school or district. This allows us to produce a single composite number that provides a snapshot of the performance of a school or district on the CMT or CAPT.

This snapshot is a useful starting point for discussing the challenges and opportunities facing our schools and district. However, the performance level for each subject and grade level represents a

¹⁵ Connecticut State Board of Education, 2012:

http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/cmt/resources/misc_cmt/CMT%20Interpretive%20Guide%2020120711%20Final.pdf

¹⁶ Connecticut State Board of Education, 2012:

http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/capt/resources/misc_capt/2012_CAPT_Interpretive_Guide.pdf

different standard¹⁷. Therefore, examining results by grade level and individual subject is the most accurate measurement of performance, but does not allow us to provide a composite number that represents a summary of school or district performance across grades and subjects.

Schools included in Bridgeport overall averages and figures

All Bridgeport schools for which data is available for a given grade level and subject are included in this report, including traditional district schools, magnet schools, and public charter schools. When the state reports test results at the district level, charter schools located in the district are not included. Therefore, the “Bridgeport” averages listed by the state do not include Bridgeport’s charter schools.

Students at grade level on all tests

This report focuses on how many and what percent of students score at goal on average, but another important measure is the number of students meeting grade level goals in all subjects tested. While the first measure provides a weighted average of the percent of students at grade level, the second counts the number of students who score at goal on all tests they take, indicating the number of students who meet grade level standards in all subjects. This data is used throughout the report and additional information about students meeting grade level goals in all subjects is provided in Appendix A.

¹⁷ Connecticut State Board of Education, 2012:

http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/capt/resources/misc_capt/2012_CAPT_Interpretive_Guide.pdf; Connecticut State Board of Education, 2012:

http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/cmt/resources/misc_cmt/CMT%20Interpretive%20Guide%2020120711%20Final.pdf

References

- Bridgeport Public Schools. (2013). *Good Schools Bridgeport: 2013-2014 Update: Phase II of Transformation*. Bridgeport: Bridgeport Public Schools.
- Center on Reinventing Public Education. (2013). *Portfolio Strategy*. Retrieved September 16, 2013, from Center on Reinventing Public Education: <http://www.crpe.org/portfolio>
- Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2012). *Frequently Asked Questions*. Retrieved September 16, 2013, from Common Core State Standards Initiative: <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions>
- Connecticut Department of Correction. (2012). *2012 Annual Report*. Hartford: State of Connecticut.
- Connecticut State Board of Education. (2012). *Connecticut Academic Performance Test Interpretive Guide*. Hartford: Connecticut State Board of Education.
- Connecticut State Board of Education. (2012). *Connecticut Mastery Test Interpretive Guide*. Hartford: Connecticut State Board of Education.
- Connecticut State Colleges and Universities: Board of Regents for Higher Education. (2011). *Supplemental High School Data Packets*. Hartford: Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education.
- Connecticut State Department of Education. (2012). *Commissioner's Network Mid-Year Operations and Instructional Audit: James J. Curiale School*. Hartford: State of Connecticut.
- Duncan, A. (2013, June 25). Duncan Pushes Back on Attacks on Common Core Standards. *Arne Duncan Remarks at the American Society of News Editors Annual Convention, Capital Hilton, Washington, D.C.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.
- eMetric. (2013). *Data Interaction for Connecticut Academic Performance Test, 3rd Generation*. Retrieved September 2013, from www.captreports.com
- eMetric. (2013). *Data Interaction for Connecticut Mastery Test, 4th Generation*. Retrieved September 2013, from www.cmtreport.com
- Lambeck, L. C. (2012, July 9). Bridgeport schools' curriculum gets overhaul. *Connecticut Post*.
- Lambeck, L. C. (2013, August 14). Test results vary by district. *Connecticut Post*.
- Lesnick, J., Goerge, R., Smithgall, C., & Gwynne, J. (2010). *Reading on Grade Level in Third Grade: How Is It Related to High School Performance and College Enrollment?* Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

McKinsey & Company. (2009). *The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools*. McKinsey & Company.

Nield, R. C. (2009). Falling Off Track during the Transition to High School: What We Know and What Can Be Done. *The Future of Children* , 19 (1).

State of Connecticut. (2013, October 3). *Bureau of Student Assessment*. Retrieved October 8, 2013, from Connecticut State Department of Education:
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2748&Q=334726>

Sum, A., Khatiwada, I., & McLaughlin, J. (2009). *The consequences of dropping out of high school : joblessness and jailing for high school dropouts and the high cost for taxpayers*. Northeastern University. Boston: Center for Labor Market Studies Publications.