



Turnaround Office Newsletter



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“Set impossible challenges, then catch up with them.”
Sir Richard Branson

Click below to access the Turnaround Office Calendars



I. Message from Interim Chief Academic Officer

Dear Colleagues,

I hope that the May Turnaround Newsletter finds you well. The month of May is a busy one, both at schools and here at the department. The Turnaround Office will be using a new, highly collaborative approach to review Alliance District/ Priority District applications efficiently. If you submitted your application on time, our consultants will be prepared to provide you with actionable feedback on your application next Thursday at our Alliance District Convening or separately in the following week.

We are pleased to bring you a variety of informative presentations at the May 7, 2015 AD Convening. In addition to opening remarks by our new Commissioner Designate, Dr. Dianna Wentzell, we bring you Hedy Nai-Len Chang, Founder and Director of *Attendance Works*. Ms. Chang will provide an interactive keynote as well as breakout sessions on student attendance and chronic absenteeism. In addition, we have a terrific line up of district and CSDE presenters. See the attached agenda and access the registration by [clicking here](#). We look forward to seeing you next week!

In partnership,
Ellen Cohn
Interim Chief Academic Officer

II. Important Dates in 2015



- May 15:
 1. SAT Redesign Workshop
 2. SIG 1003(g) Application Deadline
- May 11-29: Q3 Alliance District and Network School Monitoring
- May 27: NetStat Session

III. NetStat Session May 27, 2015

The upcoming NetStat session is scheduled **Wednesday, May 27, 2015**, at the Four Points Sheraton, 275 Research Parkway, Meriden, CT 06450. A registration link, agenda and more details on this session will be shared in the upcoming weeks. The focus of the session will be on strategies school leaders can use to build capacity to improve academic rigor. If you have not already done so, please complete the survey sent to you recently by the Turnaround Office to assist the team with planning the May 27, 2015 and future sessions.

IV. AD/PSD Application Review Process

The Turnaround Office staff would like to thank you for your work in completing the 2015-16 Alliance District/Priority Schools Applications. Review committees have been assigned to review all 30 applications. These committees consist of representatives from CSDE's Academic, Performance, Special Education, Student Support Services Offices, Talent, and Turnaround Offices, and local RESCs. Based on the feedback collected during these meetings, your Turnaround Office point of contact will provide feedback on your district's application. All Alliance Districts will have an opportunity to re-submit their plans for approval. If you have any question regarding the application process, please contact your Turnaround Office point of contact.

V. Advanced Placement®: CSDE Covers Costs of Testing for Eligible Students

Spring 2015 Advanced Placement (AP®) test fees will be fully covered for *all students qualifying for free- or reduced-price lunch (FRL) statewide*. There is no limit to the number of AP® test waivers that FRL students can receive, so please do not collect any fees from these students. The CSDE is also preparing for the fall 2015 administration of the PSAT. We anticipate covering the costs associated with this test for all students who attend schools in Alliance Districts. To help us better prepare, please notify Alan Bernstein at the College Board at (abernstein@collegeboard.org) if you have any *new high schools* that will have participating students in fall 2015.

VI. PSAT™ 8/9 Opportunity: CSDE Considers Covering Costs for Eligible Students

The CSDE is considering covering the cost of the PSAT™ 8/9 test in Alliance Districts on an optional basis. If your district is interested in using PSAT™ 8/9 test, please e-mail Michelle Rosado at (michelle.rosado@ct.gov) and note for which grade(s) (Grade 8, Grade 9, or both) you are interested in. You can find more information about PSAT™ 8/9 at <https://www.collegeboard.org/delivering-opportunity/sat-suite-of-assessments> or by contacting Alan Bernstein of the College Board at abernstein@collegeboard.org.

VII. School Readiness Grant Opportunity Reminder

The Office of Early Childhood is offering a competitive two-year school readiness grant program for both Alliance and Priority school districts. The purpose of this grant is to improve the availability and quality of school readiness programs and their coordination with the service of child care providers. All completed application packets must be received by **4:30 PM (EST) on Friday, May 15, 2015**. To view the grant application and supporting documentation, please go to the RFP page on CSDE's Web site. If you have any questions regarding this grant opportunity, please contact Gerri Rowell at gerri.rowell@ct.gov.

VIII. Quarter 3 Alliance District and Network School Monitoring

Thank you for submitting your Alliance District and Network school data and updates to the online district tracker. Your Turnaround Office point of contact will be reaching out to you to confirm your Q3 meeting date and time. Additionally, during your monitoring meeting, please be sure to have a projector available to view your district and school's data and progress updates. If you have any questions regarding this process, please reach out to your Turnaround Office point of contact.

IX. Spotlight: Dunbar Elementary Students Become Scientists

If you would like to know how to inflate a balloon without using your lung power or which gum brand to purchase for the longest lasting flavor, ask Dunbar Elementary School fourth graders. Students used scientific inquiry to complete a science fair project, which they recently presented to classmates and judges. Students researched the differences between fresh and saltwater, how clouds are made, how volcanoes erupt, probability using M&M candies and many other interesting topics. **Congratulations to the science fair winners and to all students for their fine work!**

