



Network Newsletter

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I. Upcoming Events & Reminders

September 2014

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- ✓ **9/1:** Labor Day
- ✓ **9/2:** New Britain Public Schools (NBPS) First Day of School
- ✓ **SAVE THE DATE:** for our next Netstat session on 12/10/14. More information coming soon!

II. A Message from the Division Director

Dear Network School Leaders,

Congratulations on the start of the school year. I know that nothing is more exciting (and nerve-inducing) than the night before opening day. When I think of the things that I miss most about being a principal many of them revolve around the start of the school year: that last walkthrough before kids arrive to make sure every class and bulletin board looks great; the chance to pump my staff up at our last PD sessions; and shaking hands with students at the front door on the first morning. To see kids turn the corner or step off of the bus bright-eyes, big smiles, new hair-dos, bouncy steps...that's the most special experience in the world.

We know that this year you, your schools and your staffs are more prepared than ever. We know that this is going to be a year of change and improvement at your schools. We know that this is going to be fun and rewarding and also at times challenging and frustrating. We want you to know that the CSDE Turnaround Team is here for you. We are so proud of your planning, we are so eager to help you this year, we are so grateful for the opportunity to partner for you. And mostly, we are so excited for the wonderful school year and learning opportunities your students will have.

Onward!
Morgan

III. August 13 NetStat Follow up Message and Materials

Thank you for participating in our first full-day NetStat session, which focused on refining the systems that will set our schools up for a smooth start to the year. The day of workshops was successful because of the work you have done to build, revisit, and revise many of these systems for your school. Thank you for your willingness to share your work with your peers —this collaboration is exactly what the Network is all about!

A Network-wide contact list and all NetStat materials, can be found on this Google Drive folder: [click here](#). In addition, the Network Systems of Support document and the 2014-15 Network Calendar, can be viewed on the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) website: [click here](#). Thank you again for your commitment to maximize the impact of your own school systems, and to share best practices across the Network!

IV. Site Visits and Quarterly Progress Monitoring Meetings

Our Turnaround Office is enthusiastic about beginning our site visits and walkthroughs! Your point of contact will reach out to you shortly if you have not already confirmed a time. Typically these meetings will last from one to three hours, and are an opportunity for the principal and point of contact to check in, conduct classroom walkthroughs and debrief. In addition, please also note that there will be one progress monitoring meeting scheduled per quarter throughout the year. The first meeting will take place between late October and mid-November. During each of these ninety minute meetings we will be reviewing data, essential schools systems and school-wide goals. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to your point of contact.

V. Spotlight #1: Lincoln-Bassett Community School, New Haven



According to the New Haven Independent, The Lincoln Bassett Community School began the school year with a little [wobble in their step](#). This is Lincoln's Bassett Community School's first year in the Network and one of their main priorities is to address school climate through social and character development. Lincoln Bassett Community School has incorporated Dr. James Comer's Six Developmental Pathways (Physical, Cognitive, Language, Social, Ethical and Psychological) along with the Principles of Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports to develop a set of standards and expectations for their student population called **SOAR – Safe-On task-Accountable-Respectful**. SOAR Behaviors are posted throughout the school with clear expectations specific to each area. Demonstrated behaviors of SOAR will be rewarded in a manner that motivates students toward intrinsic value, and recognized through monthly assemblies. The SOAR standards enable students and adults in the school community to understand, care about and act on core ethical values such as respect, responsibility, and safety for self and others, and to form attitudes and actions that are the hallmark of a healthy and nurturing educational environment. All school community members and stakeholders can already feel the difference, and look forward to seeing the impact on the development of their students, as well as raising their achievement! Keep up the good work, Lincoln-Bassett!

VI. Spotlight #2: John C. Clark Elementary School, Hartford



It is hard to believe that the school year is already in full swing in many districts! There were many changes awaiting students and staff when they returned to John C. Clark Elementary School last week. Clark School recently became a part of the Commissioner's Network, and over the summer, a number of improvements were made to the school facilities. Some of these improvements include replacing and/or cleaning ceiling tiles, replacing flooring and the glass surrounding doors, and repairing drywall. Also, over the summer, each classroom had a SmartBoard installed, and windows were replaced or a bright accent wall was painted, which has made each class space brighter and more inviting.

In many ways, the improvements are a lot more than just some paint, upgrades and technology. These renovations and upgrades have already made a large and palpable difference in the feel of the school. After years of not being operational, the library has new carpet and furniture and boxes and boxes of new books. The interior classrooms now have bright walls and nice layouts, which make them feel less enclosed, and the windows in the exterior classrooms are clear and beautiful. Although facilities improvements do not directly translate into increased student achievement, the new and improved backdrop certainly provides an enhanced environment for learning to occur.

At the back-to-school event last week, many families, community members and staff voiced their pride in the revitalized building, which stands out as a visible sign of hope in a community that has historically dealt with many challenges. The Clark community is looking forward to this school year and anticipates that there will be enhanced educational outcomes for its students, thanks to a shared commitment on the part of staff, students and families. To read the article highlighting these changes, "At Hartford's Clark School, Hope for a Fresh Start," published in the Courant on September 3, 2014, [click here](#). Way to go Clark, and wishing you a wonderful school year!