

2016-17 Alliance and Priority School District Consolidated Application Guidance

Form Number: ED - 705

Sections 10-262u and 10-266q of the Connecticut General Statutes

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PART I: 2016-17 APPLICATION OVERVIEW

1. APPLICATION OVERVIEW

In response to feedback from districts and in an effort to streamline and align district strategic planning processes, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is pleased to provide a consolidated grant application for 2016-17 for Alliance and Priority School Districts (PSDs). The purpose of the consolidated application is to centralize district reform priorities in one overarching plan, as supported and enabled by Alliance and PSD funding. To that end, the application is designed to ease reporting requirements and, more importantly, generate one unifying plan inclusive of grant expenditures supporting district transformation and school improvement efforts.

2. ALLIANCE DISTRICT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Alliance District (AD) program is a unique and targeted investment in Connecticut's 30 lowest-performing districts. Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) § 10-262u established a process for identifying Alliance Districts and allocating increased Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding to support district strategies to dramatically increase student outcomes and close achievement gaps by pursuing bold and innovative reforms. In total, Alliance Districts serve over 200,000 students in more than 400 schools.

Pursuant to C.G.S. § 262u, each Alliance District's receipt of its designated ECS funding is conditioned upon district submission of and the Commissioner of Education's approval of a plan, district progress and performance relative to that plan, and subsequent annual amendments, in the context of the district's overall strategy to improve academic achievement. The CSDE reviews district plans on an annual basis and approves plans aligned to the goals of the program. Annual plan approval is predicated upon district implementation and performance during the prior year. Proposals for the use of Alliance District funding will be reviewed for the quality of the plan, as well as the degree of alignment between the proposed use of funds and the overall district strategy.

3. PRIORITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OVERVIEW

The PSD grant was established to provide support for school districts with the greatest academic need. During the 2016-17 school year, 14 Alliance Districts also qualify as PSDs. Such designation provides for additional funding and also imposes additional responsibilities. As outlined in C.G.S. § 10-266q, the PSD grant provides funds to support districts in the pursuit of all or some of the following eight approved reform areas:

1. Create or expand innovative programs related to dropout prevention.
2. Establish alternative and transitional programs for students having difficulty succeeding in traditional educational programs.
3. Create academic enrichment, tutorial and recreation programs or activities in school buildings during non-school hours and during the summer.
4. Develop or expand extended-day kindergarten programs.
5. Develop or expand early reading intervention programs which include summer and after-school programming.
6. Enhance the use of technology to support instruction or to improve parent and teacher communication.
7. Strengthen parent involvement in the education of children, and parent and other community involvement in school and school district programs, activities and educational policies.
8. Obtain accreditation for elementary and middle schools from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

PSDs must use at least 20 percent of the grant funding to support early reading interventions.

4. 2016-17 LIST OF ALLIANCE AND PRIORITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The following 30 districts are entering their fifth year in the Alliance District program. During 2016-17, 14 of these districts also qualify as PSDs and are identified with an asterisk (*) below.

Ansonia	East Hartford*	Manchester	New London*	Waterbury*
Bloomfield	East Haven	Meriden*	Norwalk*	West Haven
Bridgeport*	East Windsor	Middletown	Norwich*	Winchester
Bristol	Hamden	Naugatuck	Putnam	Windham*
Danbury*	Hartford*	New Britain*	Stamford*	Windsor
Derby*	Killingly	New Haven*	Vernon	Windsor Locks

5. APPLICATION SECTIONS AND DEADLINES

The 2016-17 application consists of the following section due in draft form on May 2, 2016:

Section:	Format:
2016-17 Consolidated AD/PSD Application, Budget, and Statement of Assurances	Separate Excel template

6. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Carefully review and follow all directions when completing the various sections of the consolidated district application. Complete all of the required sections. Year 5 consolidated applications must be submitted electronically in Microsoft Excel (Section 1) and Word (Section 2) formats to SDEAllianceDistrict@ct.gov by 4:00 PM (EST) on **Monday, May 2, 2016**. Alliance Districts will have the opportunity to revise and finalize 2016-17 consolidated AD/PSD applications in summer 2016 upon the release of FY 16 allocations and assessment data. Please ensure budget proposals align to guidance provided in the Local Fiscal Processing Manual and to the Uniform Chart of Accounts (available here: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/dgm/payments/lfpm.pdf>).

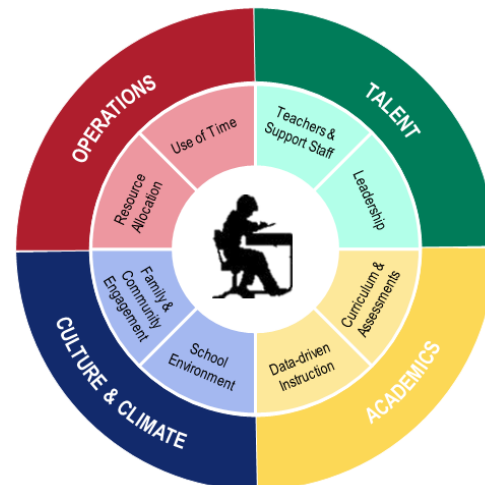
PLEASE NOTE: All applications become the property of the CSDE and are subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

7. TIMELINE SUMMARY

Activity:	Timeframe/Deadline:
1. CSDE releases the 2016-17 AD/PSD application guidance packet and planning template.	March 2016
2. Alliance Districts submit draft 2016-17 AD/PSD applications and assurances.	May 2, 2016
3. Alliance Districts revise and finalize 2016-17 AD/PSD plans and budgets informed by assessment data and final allocations.	Summer, 2016

8. REFORM PRIORITIES

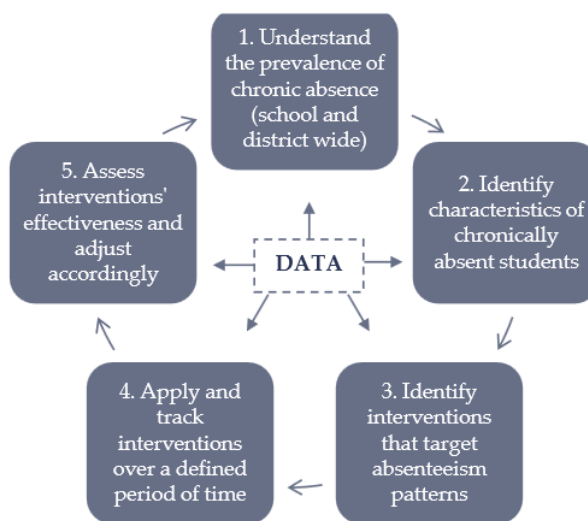
The CSDE’s turnaround framework identifies four research-based levers to dramatically improve district and school performance and student achievement. School and district success requires strong systems and performance in each of the following areas shown in the framework at right:



1. **Talent:** Employ systems and strategies to recruit, hire, develop, evaluate, and retain excellent school leaders, teachers, and support staff.
2. **Academics:** Design and implement a rigorous and engaging academic program that allows all students to achieve at high levels, including aligned curricula, instruction, and assessments.
3. **Culture and Climate:** Foster a positive learning environment that supports high-quality teaching and learning, and engages families and the community as partners in the educational process.
4. **Operations:** Create systems and processes that promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including through the use of time and financial resources.

9. 2016-17 PROGRAM REQUIREMENT

Alliance Districts with a 2014-15 student chronic absenteeism rate exceeding 10 percent must establish chronic absenteeism reduction as a priority in their 2016-17 AD/PSD application (see Culture and Climate tab/section). These districts must pursue comprehensive strategies aligned to elements 2-5 in the diagram shown at right.¹ During the May 25, 2016 Alliance District convening, districts will receive more information about this requirement and learn about best practices, strategies, and potential partnerships to decrease chronic absenteeism.



10. QUESTIONS

Any and all questions regarding the Alliance and PSD programs and consolidated 2016-17 application should be directed to districts’ CSDE points of contact and/or:

The Turnaround Office
Connecticut State Department of Education
Telephone: (860) 713-6760

¹ John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities. (2012, April). *Collaborative Approaches to Reducing Absenteeism Among K-12 Students Policy Fact Sheet*. Retrieved from Stanford University: http://jgc.stanford.edu/resources/policy_fact_sheets/Absence_Interventions_PFS.pdf