



North Haven Public Schools
North Haven, Connecticut 06473

“As a result of their experiences in the North Haven Public Schools, all students will acquire the skills necessary to meet the demands of the twenty-first century.”



October 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Every year, the **District Improvement Plan** details our work as a school system and unites us to work on a set of common goals. The plan details how we will approach the work of improving student achievement across all levels; elementary, middle, and high school. Consisting of goals in the areas of teaching and learning, improving the achievement of the lowest performing 25% of our students, leadership, district and school culture, and improving communication with all audiences in an effort to build and strengthen partnerships, the **District Improvement Plan** is designed with the district's long-term overarching goal in mind of having a minimum of 85% of all students achieve goal or higher on the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC), in grades 3-8, and the SAT which is administered in grade 11. The same expectation is also true in the area of science which is assessed in grades 5, 8, and 11.

Striving to bring 85% of our students to goal or advanced in language arts, math and, where appropriate, science is a challenging endeavor for any school district. Currently 69.1% of our students in grades 3-8 are performing at goal or better in the area of language arts and 62.4% in mathematics. Our hope is that incrementally, over time student achievement will gradually approach the 85% mark. In order to accomplish this, by June 2018 we will need to have at least 70% of our students meet this standard in math and language arts. Incremental increases have been shown to result in more lasting improvements.

To meet the needs of the lowest performing 25% of our students, there are a number of resources available in the district to help them achieve a minimum of one year's growth over the course of a school year. In an effort to address learning challenges early on, each elementary school is staffed with a math coach and two reading/language arts specialists who work with students either individually or in small groups. This provides students with reinforcement of concepts presented during classroom instruction. There are also adequate special education resources available in every school. All specialists are available to work directly with students on concepts and skills that have been introduced in the classroom and to assist teachers faced with the challenge of meeting the needs of all learners. Student progress is monitored closely, and interventions are individualized based on a student's specific needs. Support does not stop at the elementary level. Reading specialists, intervention teachers, and special education personnel are available at the middle and high school to assist students in meeting targeted standards at each level.

Another area of focus in the **District Improvement Plan** specifically addresses leadership. Principals and central office administrators are critical to district, school, and student success. School administrators are second only to teachers in terms of the critical role they play in helping all students achieve at high levels. Their understanding of curriculum, best instructional practices, and their ability to allocate resources in such

a way that they do the most good for the largest number of students makes for strong schools. Principals play an essential role in managing and assisting teachers to use student performance data to inform their instruction. To do this, they must know the students in their schools as learners.

It is essential that we develop schools where students and staff feel safe and respected. Therefore, the culture of both the district and each individual school is critical. Healthy school cultures require work on the part of everyone; administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Each school and the school system as a whole should be a source of pride for all of us. Creating healthy cultures where everyone feels respected and as though their opinions matter is essential. We want our students to be engaged and enthusiastic about their learning. If we can accomplish that, they will hopefully view learning as something they do with interest and excitement, as opposed to something being done to them by someone else. By doing so, we're building lifelong learners.

Finally, the plan contains a goal in the area of communication. Effective communication not only involves speaking, but it also requires that we listen attentively and respectfully to one another. Establishing a common, shared understanding about the work of the school system and what we're striving to accomplish strengthens our partnership and increases our chances of success.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with questions, concerns, and comments. This school system is filled with extremely talented staff members doing incredible work with students. **The District Improvement Plan** helps us to set our sights on common goals intended to make a strong system even stronger. **The 2017-2018 District Improvement Plan for the North Haven Public Schools** is posted on the district's website.

As always, thank you for everything you do on our behalf.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Cronin, Ph.D.

Robert D. Cronin, Ph.D.



