



**Next Ed: Next Steps Press Conference
Superintendent Talking Points**

March 24, 2016

9:30 Meet in LOB Cafeteria

10:00 am Press Conference, Room 1D
Legislative Office Building

Today we have been challenged to answer an important call to action – to transform our education system so the learner is at the center of all strategy and action. As the superintendent of Hartford Public Schools, I am proud to say that we step up to answer that challenge.

I am pleased to share with you what the CAPSS recommendations look like in action in a large, urban district. In Hartford—a district of high performing nationally recognized magnet schools and some of the lowest performing schools in the state, we started with the question: what will it take so that every student thrives and every school is high performing? Our new strategic plan is the answer to that question.

We believe if you have high expectations for students, engage each and every one, and expand the capacity of adults, then we will achieve more equitable outcomes where every student thrives and every school is high performing?

But what does that look like in action? In Hartford, we put students at the center of their learning by implementing student success plans that help chart the course to a student’s future—with a caring adult advocating for and supporting the student to lift that plan off the page and bring it to life. With an agenda to accelerate learning in our lowest performing schools, each student has a plan of support and enrichment to ensure they are ready and present for learning in the classroom.

We raised our standards and have infused our classrooms with language and literacy so our students learn to read, write, listen, think and lead well. And to honor the gift of students knowing a second or third language and leveraging that strength!

We are providing customized experiences through a specialized schools of choice and high school centers of innovation—pairing magnet and neighborhood schools to better engage students the smart use of technology; project-based learning and internships; and mastery based learning—it’s not about seat time any more.

While we are putting students at the center of their learning, we can't forget the adults. If adults don't change and strengthen their practice, we will not get better outcomes for kids. So our second key strategy is to develop leaders to lead for learning by ensuring rich opportunities for adult learning and collaboration both in and across schools. And strengthening family and community partnerships. I am pleased to report that we convened a community conversation on race, racism and equity this past Saturday that drew more than 700 people—the second conversation in a series of building Family Friendly Schools.

In Hartford, we know it takes a village—or a city, in our case—and we are not only strengthening the ways we engage students but also our entire community. Our vision for students in Hartford is that they will transform their world. Our job is to inspire and prepare students to create their own success in and beyond school.

Next Ed: Next Steps articulates a vision and plan for transforming Connecticut's education system, laying out a set of recommendations – to guide schools and districts, families and communities, partners and policymakers – in the important work of putting students at the center of their learning. As the leader of Hartford Public Schools, a district committed to equity and excellence, I am thrilled to support *Next Ed: Next Steps* as a valuable tool and a shining beacon to support our work.

Thank you.