

Tootin' Hills Elementary School  
Simsbury, Connecticut

*Continuous Improvement Plan*  
2018-2019



*Maggie Seidel, Principal*

# Tootin' Hills School *Continuous Improvement Plan*

## **Purpose & Overview**

**2018 – 2019**

Tootin' Hills School joins all of the Simsbury Public Schools in their commitment to prepare all of our children for productive and meaningful life and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is through a systematic process of continuous improvement that our school district and our school can engage all stakeholders in fulfilling the priorities we so highly value and have clearly expressed through our District Vision and Core Beliefs. Our Vision states,

*“The Simsbury Public Schools cultivate the mind, body and character of each student. We engage students with a meaningful and rigorous academic foundation so that they can contribute to a global society with integrity, compassion and resilience.”*

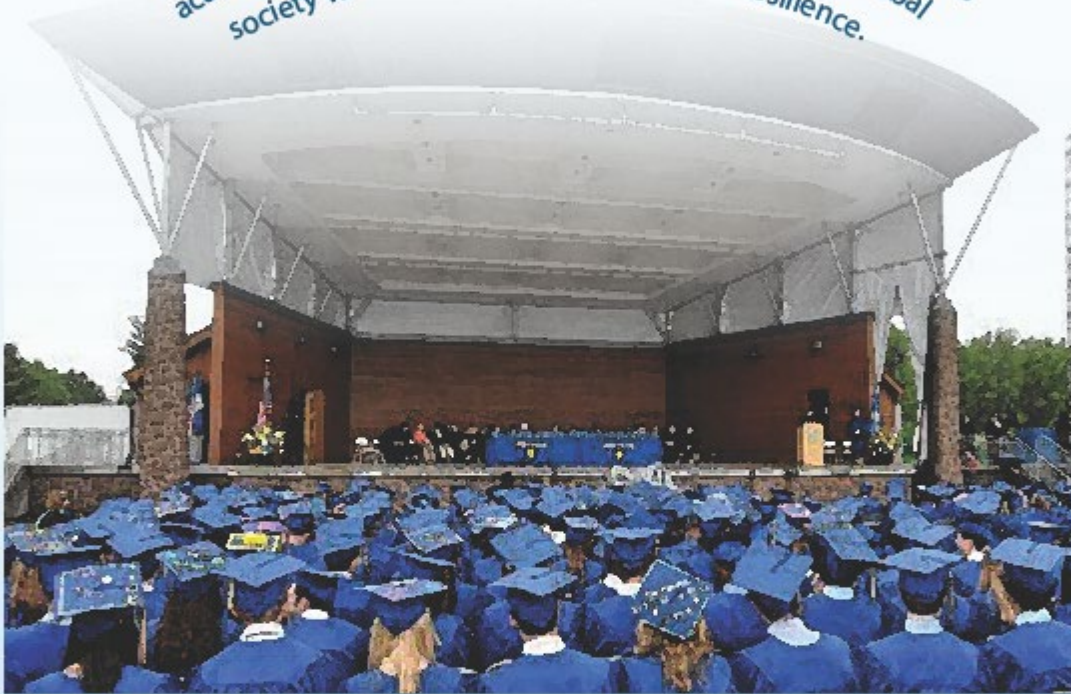
This **Continuous Improvement Plan** is a comprehensive overview of the status of our school and a summary of our collaborative efforts to continue to improve. It articulates the Tootin' Hills School goals as well as our plans for assessment, instructional and professional development activities to be accomplished as we work to achieve these goals. It includes our school description, a statement of our beliefs and mission, leadership structure, and school improvement and quality indicators for the 2018-2019 school year. Goals and priorities are established with input from our stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents and administrators. These goals and priorities are continually informed by a cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation. Goals and priorities are always intended to improve student learning, advance student achievement, and enhance the learning environment for all students at Tootin' Hills School.

Grade level teams, departmental teams, certified support and specialty teachers – all members of various **Professional Learning Communities** - have developed action plans in support of our academic improvement indicators. These action plans are designed to align school improvement efforts in ways that more specifically mirror each teacher's specific role, but always specify a purposeful set of intended student learning outcomes, meaningful “action steps”, and reliable indicators of student success. As the school year progresses, using information from daily observation, student assessments and student performance on classroom assignments, teachers continually work to sharpen their instruction, adjusting and differentiating their teaching to meet the myriad needs of their diverse learners. Teaching teams report their progress to the principal at regular intervals throughout the year.

As we continue to strive for school improvement we need to remember that schools and school programs are constructed of people with the ultimate goal to improve our own quality and effectiveness with the best interest of our students always in mind.

# District Vision for the Simsbury Public Schools

The Simsbury Public Schools cultivate the mind, body, and character of each student. We engage students with a meaningful and rigorous academic foundation so that they can contribute to a global society with integrity, compassion, and resilience.



## Core Beliefs

### We believe in...

- ★ Challenging expectations
- ★ High standards
- ★ Passion for lifelong learning
- ★ Academic and extracurricular experiences that emphasize intellectual, physical, artistic, and social/emotional well-being
- ★ Collaboration and communication among families and school personnel
- ★ Building relationships between staff, students, and community
- ★ Family and community partnerships
- ★ Continuous improvement and excellence

## **Tootin' Hills Elementary School**

### **Vision Statement:**

#### **Tootin' Hills School...**

*is a caring, accepting educational community where adults and children are valued as learners and as people. Our school is an environment in which it is safe to take risks, to make mistakes, and to grow. From the principal to the youngest child, everyone practices the skills needed to respectfully interact with each other and takes responsibility for their learning and behavior. The graduates of Tootin' Hills School will exemplify integrity, academic accomplishment, and the joy of learning embraced by the Tootin' Hills School community.*

The ultimate goal for all that we do at Tootin' Hills School is to provide instruction and experiences that enable each student to achieve across our curriculum at the highest possible level, in an environment characterized by respect, mutual support, and emotional and physical safety.

No matter the job title, every adult at Tootin' Hills School is a teacher and takes the obligations that accompany such a role very seriously. We are a collaborative team working together today in order to help families shape the confident, caring, and productive citizens and community members of tomorrow.

## ***School Description***

The “mascot” of Tootin’ Hills School is a train engine. Outside the principal’s office on the wall that leads to the Kindergarten classrooms is a mural and it depicts *The Little Engine That Could* from Watty Piper’s 1930 children’s classic of the same name. “*I think I can; I think I can*” – these are the words that sum up the collective attitude of our school community. To become the world-class school that our community strives for, much is needed to be accomplished. It is the vision of our Board of Education, our Superintendent, and all of us who work here and we do think we can.

Tootin’ Hills Elementary School serves a student population of approximately 350 students, Kindergarten through Grade Six. We embrace a diverse population both culturally and socio-economically. In addition, we have a *Ready, Set, Go* program for children with autism. The students enrolled in *Ready, Set, Go* are included for a significant portion of their day in general education classrooms.

We are proud to contribute to the reputation of effectiveness enjoyed by the Simsbury Public Schools and realize the challenge we face to maintain such a reputation. Our school day starts at 8:15 and ends at 2:50. There is an incredible amount to accomplish at every grade level in the Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and in the Arts. Our rigorous curriculum sets the stage for our success. We highly value collaboration with parents – a partnership that promotes year-round learning and nurtures the desire for *life-long* learning for our students.

At Tootin’ Hills School we have well-rounded and highly capable students. They are the foundation of our success and we are very proud of their accomplishments academically, artistically, and athletically. We are continually impressed with their achievements. Every adult in our school recognizes his or her role in promoting and supporting such achievement. Every adult in our school also acts as a role model and as a teacher. Tootin’ Hills School is built on the character ideals of ***Respect, Responsibility, Caring*** and ***Integrity***. We believe that developing these character ideas, in addition to promoting a positive ***Growth Mindset***, are as important as academic achievement in developing the ***whole child***.

Our parents are a constant, visible presence in our school. They encourage and motivate their children. They are present as volunteers in classrooms, managing projects, working as members of our PTO, or simply lending a hand for an hour or two. They can be counted upon to support the efforts of their children and of our teachers. They are highly educated, understand the value of educational achievement and generally provide rich life experiences for their children outside of the school day. They, too, are the foundation of our success and we who teach are ever so grateful for their continual support and collaboration.

Our teachers work extremely hard at the craft of teaching and learning. They are continually working at refining their skills and improving their effectiveness. As members of ***Professional Learning Communities***, they are enthusiastic about their collaborative efforts toward instructional improvement and student achievement. The professional development that results from these relationships is of the highest quality. The development of teacher leadership skills is also a hallmark of our school. Teachers are actively involved on committees and in groups dedicated to continuous improvement across the district.

We are proud of our many building-based programs: *Project Outreach*, through which we provide for our friends in a shelter in Hartford and in a program for unfortunate youth nearby; our involvement in *Open Choice*; our Art Club; our Student Council; our *Take Action Club*; our All Aboard Families; our cultural enrichment program; our intramural program; our variety of field trips; the multitude of programs sponsored by our Parent-Teacher Organization; our annual Camp Jewell Outdoor Education program.

Tootin’ Hills School’s success continues to depend on collaboration– parents/guardians, children, teachers, and the Simsbury community. We will not be truly successful until 100% of our students reach 100% of our goals every year.

## ***Leadership Teams***

The teachers at Tootin' Hills School are expected to rise to positions of leadership within the school and are encouraged to prepare for and aspire toward positions of leadership within our district. Leadership opportunities exist within specific curriculum areas and also within the more generalized domain of school community leadership.

- **Leadership Team.** The primary function of this group for the 2016-2017 school year is to examine teaching practices related to a specific focus identified by the group and to determine themes that will guide the next level of work.
- **Professional Learning Communities (PLC)** are comprised of teaching teams with a common purpose to review student work, analyze assessments, participate in peer visits, and refine instructional practice. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) include teaching teams at each grade level (K-6) while teachers in specialty areas are members of their own building and district-wide Professional Learning Communities.
- **Student Intervention Team (SIT).** The focus of this group will be on the early identification of students with academic and/or behavioral difficulties. Interventions will be devised and utilized to support students' needs in the general education setting
- **Student Reading Intervention Program (SRIP) Data Team.** This team supports students who need extra reading support. During these Data Team meetings, assessments and interventions are discussed and adjusted as determined by student growth and progress.
- **Character Education Committee.** This group meets multiple times per year to refine our character education program, more completely involve students in its activities, and to plan specific activities in support of the program goals.
- **PTO Executive Board.** The PTO Executive Board meets with the building principal once per month to plan and coordinate the wide range of activities conducted by parents/guardians as they work to enhance the quality of student and community experience with classrooms, grade levels, and the entire school.
- **Student Council.** The Student Council is advised by two Tootin' Hills teachers and serves to provide students with leadership opportunities. The Student Council oversees school-wide service learning and character building activities and brings suggestions to the principal for school-wide improvements and activities.

## Indicator #1: Student Achievement – Grade 3

### Focus Area 1:

All students will read on grade level at the end of grade 3, as measured by:

- DRA2: percentage of students scoring at/above Level 38NF, and
- DRP: percentage of students scoring at/above 47

### Strategy / What must occur to accomplish the goal: (If/Then)

- If we use the *eight best practices* from the National Reading Panel to guide and focus all resource, scheduling, and program decisions, then literacy proficiency in the early grades will rise.
  - If we ensure the implementation of a balanced literacy model at each grade level, then DRA levels will increase.
  - If we implement research based instructional strategies to meet the individual needs of all learners with an emphasis on comprehension, then overall grade level reading performance will improve.
  - If we use Professional Learning Community (PLC) time to analyze data and to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and instructional strategies across all tiers, then reading instruction and student performance will improve.
  - If we clearly define highly effective teaching along with a system to regularly monitor it –*PLC-Based rounds model*, then teachers will have greater focus in identifying a problem of practice, observing colleagues, collecting evidence, providing feedback, and ongoing reflection for improvement.
  - If we utilize data teams and the Student Intervention Team (SIT) process to monitor the effectiveness of interventions, then student reading will improve.

### SMART Goal: Specific / Measureable / Aggressive yet Achievable / Relevant / Time-bound

#### SMART Goals for 2018-2019:

- 85-90% of Kindergarten students will score a level 4 by June 2019
- 85-90% of 1<sup>st</sup> grade students will score a level 18 by June 2019
- 85-90% of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students will score a level 28 by June 2019
- 83-87% of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students will score a level 38 by June 2019
- 80-83% of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students will score a 47 on the DRP by June 2019
- 83-85% of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students will score a DRA2 level (38) and DRP (47) by June 2019

## Indicator #2: Student Achievement – Grade 6

### Focus Area 2:

All students will perform on grade level in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of grade 6, as measured by:

- Reading: Increased percentage of sixth grade students scoring at or above a 62 on the spring Degrees of Reading Power (DRP). All students take the STAR reading assessment three times during the school year to gather data for instructional purposes and monitor growth over time
- Writing: Increased percentage of grade six students will meet or exceed the end of the year writing standard by achieving a minimum cumulative score of 53 on the SPS analytic writing rubric.
- Mathematics: All students take the STAR math assessment three times during the school year to gather data for instructional purposes and monitor growth over time.

### Strategy / What must occur to accomplish the goal: (If/Then)

#### Reading

- If we implement research based instructional strategies to meet the individual needs of all learners with an emphasis on comprehension, then overall grade level reading performance will improve.
- If we implement a standardized reading assessment (STAR reading) then teachers will have actionable results from which to base student learning plans.
- If we use Professional Learning Community (PLC) time to analyze data and to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and instructional strategies across all tiers, then reading instruction and student performance will improve.
- If we clearly define highly effective teaching along with a system to regularly monitor it –*PLC-Based rounds model*, then teachers will have greater focus in identifying a problem of practice, observing colleagues, collecting evidence, providing feedback, and ongoing reflection for improvement.
- If we utilize data teams and the Student Intervention Team (SIT) process to monitor the effectiveness of interventions, then student reading will improve.

#### Writing

- If we utilize our workshop model to teach students the traits of writing (focus, elaboration, organization, voice, and conventions), and provide frequent feedback by conferring with students, then students will be skilled writers.
- If we implement research based instructional strategies aligned with the SPS trait-based analytic writing rubric, then overall grade level writing will improve.
- If we interpret student writing with consistency using the analytic writing rubric, then we will have increased reliability among scorers.
- If we utilize PLCs to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and instructional strategies across all tiers, then writing instruction and student performance will improve.

#### Math

- If we implement a standardized math assessment (STAR math) then teachers will have actionable results from which to base student learning plans.
- If teachers collaborate in PLCs and with district math support staff to analyze results and plan instruction then student math performance will improve.



**SMART Goals for 2018-2019:**

***Reading***

- 80-85% of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students will score a 54 or better on the DRP by June 2019
- 88-90% of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will score a 58 or better on the DRP by June 2019
- 82-86% of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will score a 62 or better on the DRP by June 2019
- 80-85% of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students will meet the end of year STAR reading standard by June 2019
- 80-85% of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will meet the end of year STAR reading standard by June 2019
- 80-85% of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will meet the end of year STAR reading standard by June 2019

***Writing***

- 80-84% of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students will meet the end of year writing standard by June 2019
- 80-84% of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will meet the end of year writing standard by June 2019
- 85-88% of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will meet the end of year writing standard by June 2019

***Mathematics***

- 80-85% of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students will meet the end of year STAR math standard by June 2019
- 80-85% of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will meet the end of year STAR math standard by June 2019
- 80-85% of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will meet the end of year STAR math standard by June 2019

## Indicator #5: Student Achievement – Positive Choices

### Focus Area 5:

All students will demonstrate positive social choices at the elementary, middle and high school levels, as measured by:

- Increased percentage of students receiving school-based positive student recognition
- Increased percentage of students not requiring Tier 2\* behavior intervention

### Strategy / What must occur to accomplish the goal: (If/Then)

- If we reinforce the tenants of good character in our school Character Education program, then all students will demonstrate respectful behaviors and improve their sense of social and emotional security in school.
- If systems are monitored/created to track recognition for positive social choices and interventions for behaviors that require correction, then character/climate committees can develop action plans to address specific school based needs.
- If we continue to adopt practices from Responsive Classroom training, then teachers will implement additional classroom management techniques and strategies for promoting academic choice, creating a positive classroom community, and teaching in a developmentally appropriate way.

### SMART Goal: Specific / Measureable / Aggressive yet Achievable / Relevant / Time-bound

#### SMART Goals for 2018-2019:

- 90-100% of students will receive school-based positive behavioral recognition
- Fewer than 10% of students at the elementary level will not have required a Tier 2\* behavior intervention.

\*Tier 2 behavior intervention is defined by either an action/consequence taken by administration and/or referral to the SIT process for behavior.

## Indicator #6: Professionalism - Highly Effective Teaching and Leading

### Focus Area 6:

Highly effective teaching in every classroom supported by highly effective instructional leaders in every school building, as measured by:

- Leader: Involving the school leadership team in identifying a leadership challenge; engaging the Leadership Team in a *rounds* model of observation, debriefs, reflection, commitments to follow-up cycle; and sharing learning/outcomes as a school community with a focus on improving teaching and learning
- Teacher: Participating in teacher/PLC Rounds which is driven by the teacher team identifying a problem of practice; providing feedback through a cycle of observation, questions, learnings, along with reflection; and commitments that positively impact teaching and student learning for all involved

### Strategy / What must occur to accomplish the goal: (If/Then)

- If highly effective teaching strategies are well defined along with a system to regularly monitor it (*school-based and PLC-based rounds model*); then educators will have greater focus in collecting evidence, providing feedback, and ongoing reflection for improvement in instructional practice that positively impacts student learning.
- If standards of highly effective teaching are clearly defined (with a focus on Instruction/Service Delivery Standard #4, Planning Standard #3, and Assessment Standard #5) and leading (with a focus on PE #2 Teaching & Learning) by building common language across the district for teachers and leaders; then we will have a greater ability to identify and promote highly effective teaching and leading practices.
- If all evaluators' skill sets are developed around the use of strategic conversations, with a greater focus on effective feedback to teachers that is specific, useful, timely, and actionable; then teachers will be able to readily incorporate such feedback into practice thereby increasing their instructional effectiveness and improving student learning.
- If opportunities are provided for educators to engage in collaborative analysis of student work/assessment results, and educators regularly work together to refine their instructional practices and leadership skills in light of those results; then student learning will increase.
- If evaluators develop their skill in designing rigorous and targeted student learning objectives (SLOs) that measure growth over time; share this skill with teachers as they develop their plans for SLO(s); then teachers will engage in skillful instruction to move student learning to higher levels.
- If student learning related to individual educators' instructional practices is measured, as well as grade level and district performance; then educators will identify students who are improving, celebrate and share best practices, as well as identify and support educators whose students are not exhibiting the expected learning outcomes as defined through our curriculum-based and standardized assessments.

**SMART Goals for 2018-2019:**

**Leader:**

By the end of the year, every school-based team will engage in quality *cycles of rounds* that provides professional colleagues to work together to reflect on current practices; refine and build new skills; share ideas; teach one another; conduct classroom research; and/or solve problems of practice that result in documentation of effective instructional strategies and methodologies that positively impact student learning across the school.

Leaders will engage all faculty in reflection of the *rounds* process by asking the following:

- How can we measure the effectiveness of the professional learning we have been engaging in throughout the year?
- What has been the impact on student learning?
- In what ways did we improve our teaching this year?

**Teacher:**

By the end of the year, all PLC's (teacher teams) will engage in high quality *cycles of rounds* that provides professional colleagues opportunities to work together to reflect on current practices; refine and build new skills; share ideas; teach one another; conduct classroom research; and/or solve problems of practice that result in documentation of effective instructional strategies and methodologies that positively impact student learning.

Teachers will reflect on his or her record of practice through the following:

- How can I measure the effectiveness of the professional learning I have been engaging in throughout the year?
- What has been the impact on student learning?
- In what ways did I improve my teaching this year?

## Indicator #7: Student Safety and Social/Emotional Well-Being

### Focus Area 7:

Stakeholders express satisfaction with the district's efforts related to safety and social/emotional well-being, as measured by:

- Percentages of students responding favorably on the following Social/Emotional Security Indicators:
  - “If a student is bullied in school, how difficult is it for him or her to get help from an adult?”
  - “Overall, how much do you feel like you belong at your school?”
  - “How much respect do students at your school show you?”
  - “Overall, how safe do you feel at your school?”
- Percentages of stakeholders (staff and parents) responding favorably to the following Student Safety Indicators:
  - “Overall, how safe do you feel as a teacher at this school?” (staff)
  - “Overall, how safe does your child feel at this school?” (parents/guardians)
  - “Overall, how safe does your child feel at this school? (parents/guardians)

### Strategy / What must occur to accomplish the goal: (If/Then)

- If students are provided a safe, physical environment in school, then they will be able to concentrate/actively engage in their learning.
- If students feel they are in schools with positive school climates, then they will be able to devote more time to their learning.
- If faculty and staff of the Simsbury Public Schools define and implement specific, measurable actions to address the physical and social/emotional security of students, then there will be an increase in positive school climate and students will feel safer in school.

**SMART Goals:**

As evidenced by the results from the Spring administration of a survey modeled on the Panorama survey that was taken in 2015, favorability percentages will increase from and to the following:

**Elementary Students**

| Indicator  | 2015 Favorability % | 2017 Favorability % | 2018 Favorability % | 2019 Goal Favorability % |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| If a student is bullied in school, how difficult is it for him or her to get help from an adult? | 73%                 | 64%                 | 66%                 | 80%                      |
| Overall, how much do you feel like you belong at your school?                                    | 72%                 | 68%                 | 78%                 | 80%                      |
| How much respect do students at your school show you?  | 58%                 | 61%                 | 75%                 | 80%                      |
| Overall, how safe do you feel at your school?  | 81%                 | 87%                 | 78%                 | 90%                      |

**Faculty and Parents**

| Indicator  | 2015 Favorability % | 2017 Favorability % | 2019 Goal Favorability % |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Overall, how safe do you feel as a teacher at this school? (faculty)       | 95%                 | 89%                 | 90% or >                 |
| The principal makes safety a priority (parents/guardians)                  | 91%                 | 100%                | Maintain >90%            |
| Overall, how safe does your child feel at this school? (parents/guardians) | N/A                 | N/A                 | 90% or >                 |

*\*Note: The parent question was worded differently on the 2017 survey. We plan to administer a district survey in the Spring of 2019 to all stakeholder groups. From this point forward, the parent survey on safety will use the wording from the 2017 administration.*

# Quality Indicators

## Simsbury Public Schools Tootin' Hills School Quality Indicators

|  | Current<br>2017-18 | Three-Year History |         |         |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|---------|---------|
|  |                    | 2016-17            | 2015-16 | 2014-15 |

### Science CMT

|  |         |     |    |      |      |
|--|---------|-----|----|------|------|
| Percent of Students At/Above Goal        | Grade 5 | N/A | 85 | 85   | 80.0 |
| Percent of Students in the Advanced Band | Grade 5 | N/A | 42 | 40.5 | 44.6 |

|  | Current<br>2017-18 | Three-Year Trend |         |         |
|--|--------------------|------------------|---------|---------|
|  |                    | 2016-17          | 2015-16 | 2014-15 |

| Smarter Balanced Assessment – Literacy (ELA)    |         |    |    |      |      |
|---|---------|----|----|------|------|
| Percent of students attaining Level 3 or better | Grade 3 | 66 | 79 | 84.5 | 89.6 |
|   | Grade 4 | 93 | 79 | 87.3 | 85.4 |
|   | Grade 5 | 84 | 81 | 76.6 | 83.1 |
|   | Grade 6 | 89 | 87 | 83.6 | 81.1 |

|                                |         |    |    |      |      |
|--------------------------------|---------|----|----|------|------|
| Percent of Students in Level 4 | Grade 3 | 38 | 50 | 63.8 | 67.2 |
|                                | Grade 4 | 68 | 59 | 68.3 | 52.1 |
|                                | Grade 5 | 52 | 51 | 48.9 | 56.9 |
|                                | Grade 6 | 53 | 48 | 58.2 | 55.2 |

| Smarter Balanced Assessment – Mathematics       |         |    |    |      |      |
|---|---------|----|----|------|------|
| Percent of students attaining Level 3 or better | Grade 3 | 64 | 76 | 75.8 | 82.7 |
|   | Grade 4 | 66 | 71 | 74.6 | 75.1 |
|   | Grade 5 | 61 | 68 | 71.7 | 63.1 |
|   | Grade 6 | 79 | 78 | 71.6 | 44.8 |

|                                |         |    |    |      |      |
|--------------------------------|---------|----|----|------|------|
| Percent of Students in Level 4 | Grade 3 | 32 | 47 | 37.9 | 51.7 |
|                                | Grade 4 | 36 | 37 | 30.2 | 18.8 |
|                                | Grade 5 | 34 | 41 | 47.8 | 38.5 |
|                                | Grade 6 | 53 | 54 | 35.8 | 27.6 |

### Other Academic Indicators

|   |         |      |      |      |      |
|---|---------|------|------|------|------|
| Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Physical Fitness Standards   | Grade 4 | 69   | 45   | 44   | 58   |
|   | Grade 6 | 65   | 62   | 56   | 57   |
| Special Education Prevalence Rate   |         | 11.2 | 10.1 | 10.1 | 9.7  |
| Percent of K-3 Special Education Students At/Above Grade Level Reading Goals  |         | 52   | 46   | 47.3 | 51.1 |
| Percent of teachers who agree/strongly agree that their instructional practice has substantially improved as a result of participating in their PLC |         | 96   | 92.6 | 88.0 | 92.3 |

### Character Education Indicators

|   |      |      |      |      |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| Number of Character Conductor Tickets Awarded                     | 652  | 649  | 644  | 634  |
| Number of students who required Tier 2 disciplinary intervention  | 28   | 19   | 26   | NA   |
| Number of Individual Students Awarded Character Conductor Tickets | 345  | 344  | 352  | 348  |
| Percent of Students Attending 95% or More of School Days          | 90.0 | 91.3 | 80.5 | 75.1 |