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Norwalk Public Schools Leads Large Connecticut Cities in Performance Index and Math; Sees Another Drop in Chronic Absenteeism

Norwalk, Conn. (Aug. 30, 2024) -- Norwalk Public Schools continues to lead other large cities across the state for the state's Performance Index and math proficiency. The district also saw another significant drop in chronic absenteeism. Attendance matters as it is an essential prerequisite for learning.

The Connecticut State Department of Education recently released the results from the spring 2024 state assessments and chronic absenteeism data. The results show that across the state, there were overall improvements in student achievement in mathematics and science for the second consecutive year, with the most noticeable improvements across the majority of student groups in mathematics. English language arts (ELA) was at or above 2022-23 levels in Grades 3 through 7.

Chronic absenteeism rates dropped by 2.3 percentage points, with 11,674 more students attending regularly. Over 80% of districts improved, and the state's Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP) - an evidence-based home visitation program - is driving double-digit gains in attendance.

Norwalk Public Schools ranked highest among other large Connecticut cities in the Performance Index for math and ELA, and second overall for science. The Performance Index is the best measure of overall average achievement across standard and alternate assessments in a content area.

"We have a lot to celebrate this year with our continued growth in math and English Language Arts. I commend our dedicated teachers and instructional coaches for their tireless efforts to keep our scholars competitive not just among other large Connecticut cities but on a state and national level," said Dr. Alexandra Estrella, Superintendent of Norwalk Public Schools. "At the same time, we recognize there's still more work ahead. We remain committed to building on this progress and ensure all our scholars reach the highest levels of achievement."

Math proficiency increased by 1.7 percentage points among all Norwalk students (grades 3-8), comparable to the state's 1.6 percentage point increase.

Norwalk Public Schools also ranked first among other large Connecticut cities for academic

growth in math and second for academic growth in ELA (science is not measured). Academic growth is a leading indicator of student achievement as it measures the pace of student learning in a school year.

High needs students in Norwalk outperformed the state in several categories including academic growth for both ELA and math and had a higher performance index in math, compared to the state.

Norwalk Public Schools saw its chronic absentee numbers drop by 1.3 percentage points overall in 2023-24 compared to the previous year. This is a decline of 6.2%.

Despite the improvement, the district is still not satisfied with this high rate of chronic absenteeism and more work needs to be done to see that the decline over the last two years continues until all our students are attending school regularly.

Achieving regular attendance for all our scholars only bolsters the ongoing academic recovery following the pandemic. It is promising to see that Norwalk's high needs students had a lower rate of chronic absenteeism than the state - 24.3% compared to 25.5% for the state. Norwalk Public Schools is always striving to perform better than the state average in all areas of performance and growth.

“We can't stress enough how important it is for our scholars to be in school every day. Daily attendance is critical to building reading proficiency, developing healthy routines, and staying on track to graduate high school.” Estrella said.

A full presentation of Norwalk Public Schools' state assessment results and a look at the district's chronic absenteeism numbers will be provided at the Norwalk Board of Education workshop on **Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2024 at 7 p.m.** at the NPS Family Center.