



**For Immediate Release:**

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## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LAUNCHES ONLINE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE DATABASE

HARTFORD, CT—Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor announced the launch of an online database today to provide information to parents and other public school stakeholders on school performance. For each public school in Connecticut, the website provides parents and educators with two important pieces of data, both central to Connecticut’s new school accountability and support system: the School Performance Index (or “SPI”) and the graduation rate (for high schools).

“The state’s new school accountability and support framework enables more precise, more helpful snapshots of school performance,” Commissioner Pryor said. “By heralding schools making significant progress and highlighting schools in need of greater support, the system will also help districts and the state focus our efforts where they are needed most.”

A school’s SPI—an average of student performance in all tested grades and subjects for a given school—allows for the evaluation of school performance across all tested grades, subjects and performance levels on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). The SPI and graduation rates are among the inputs for the new school classifications – including Schools of Distinction, Turnaround Schools, Focus Schools, and Review Schools – announced by the Connecticut State Department of Education last week.

The use of the SPI and graduation rates in the state’s new school accountability and support system was enabled by Connecticut’s successful federal application for a waiver from certain aspects of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The new system improves upon NCLB’s less flexible approach by incorporating student growth and performance across all levels (rather than merely tracking the percentage of students scoring at the proficient level, an approach that masked school progress with students at other performance levels); integrating Science and Writing (rather than merely focusing on Mathematics and Reading); and raising expectations for schools to address achievement gaps between students subgroups.

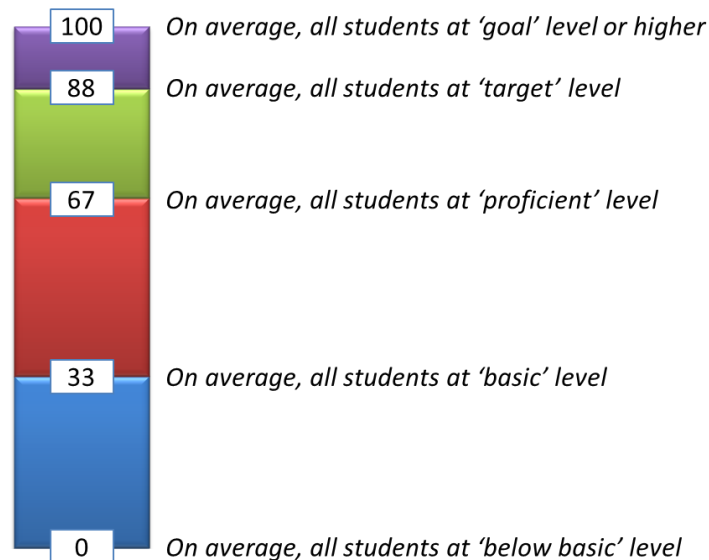
The CMT test is administered to school children in grades 3 to 8 and tests students in the areas of Mathematics, Reading, Writing and Science (grades 5 and 8 only). The CAPT test is administered in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade and tests Mathematics, Reading, Writing and Science subject areas.

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## Graph 1: Average student performance at key index scores

*School performance index points*

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As an example, if a school has an SPI of 33, then on average, its students are performing at the 'basic' level across all tests they take. If another school has an SPI of 67, then on average its students are performing at the 'proficient' level across all tests they take. The State's target for schools is 88 SPI points on the 0-100 index scale. At this value students will have performed at the 'goal' level on the majority of tests they take (e.g., if students in a given school take three tests, on average they will have performed at the 'goal' level on two of the three tests and at the 'proficient' level on one).

Previously under No Child Left Behind, characterizing and understanding the performance of a given school was difficult. Earlier this year, the Connecticut State Department of Education participated in a federal application process for flexibility from certain requirements of No Child Left Behind. In May, the U.S. Department of Education approved Connecticut's flexibility request (or waiver), allowing the State to establish a new accountability system to assess school performance. The new performance measurement system improves the State's ability to provide more accurate and appropriate interventions, support and recognition to local schools.

The development of the school performance reporting system is an evolving process. Enhancements will be made in the future -- including new elements and indicators, more user friendly features, etc. The State Department of Education looks forward to engaging in continued dialogue with all stakeholders in order to refine this system, to provide improved access to high-quality information, and to produce ever better results for all students.

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