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Positive Trends in Hartford CMT Scores Indicate that Reform Measures are Working

Hartford Schools Post Third Straight Year of Student Gains

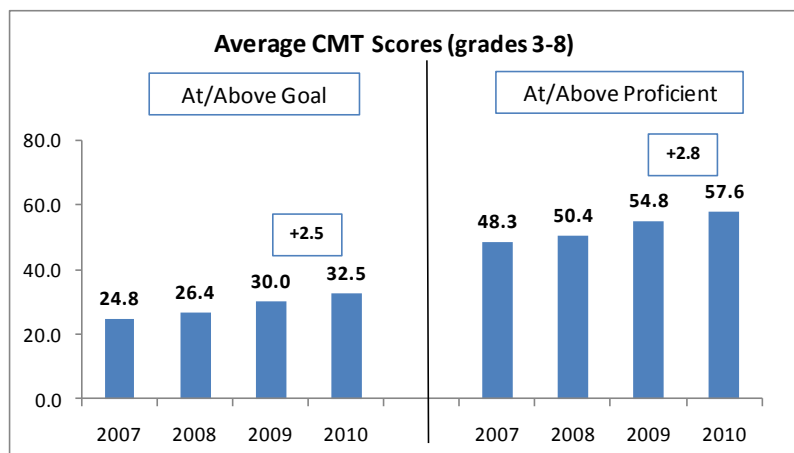
Protecting the Momentum Needs to be a Priority

HARTFORD, CT (July 15, 2010) – Based on state 2010 CMT data released today for grades 3-8, reform efforts adopted by Hartford’s Board of Education are demonstrating meaningful impacts. The school system has produced a third year in a row of solid gains in the elementary and middle school grades. These overall improving results are an indication of the importance of creating and maintaining a culture of high expectations in our schools and in our community. Protecting the current momentum must remain a priority for all stakeholders of education here in Hartford.

CAPT data, which assesses 10th grade performance, has not yet been released by the State. That data, once available, will provide a more complete picture on Hartford’s performance.

“The CMT results announced today continue the positive trend we have seen from Hartford’s schools for three years in a row,” said Jim Starr, Executive Director of *Achieve Hartford!*. “With another year of consistent gains, this is a clear indication that the reform strategies implemented by the School District and Board of Education are making a real difference.”

On average, Hartford students gained 2.5 points over last year as measured as a percentage of students performing at Goal. Results relative to Proficiency - the performance category most often used by the District - showed a similar increase of 2.8 points over last year; both demonstrating a positive trend.



Achieve Hartford! realizes that the reform is still fragile and that much work lies ahead, as the achievement gap remains quite large. Even with results tracking the solid performance seen over the last three years, Hartford's current gap compared to the State of approximately 25 points would need another 8 years to close. As a result, Hartford cannot let up on its commitment to improving its schools.

Selected CMT data for grades 3-8 showed the following:

- Since 2007, the percent of student performing at proficiency level has increased 9.3 points.
- 57.6% of Hartford students are performing at Proficiency compared to a state average of 82.6%.
- As a result of this year's performance, Hartford's achievement gap relative to the rest of the State narrowed somewhat to 25 points from a gap of 31 points that existed in 2007.
- Relative to targets set by the School District for 2010, 4 of 5 of the district measures that have been established to gauge overall performance were achieved, with 5th grade writing falling short. However, all five measures increased over last year.
- Reading scores improved overall by an average of 3.4 points, with strong gains posted in the 3rd, 6th and 8th grades with 4th and 5th grades down from last year.
- Math scores improved overall by an average of 6.1 points, with strong gains posted in all grades.
- Writing showed mixed results with an overall average .6 point decrease. 3rd through 6th grades increased while 7th and 8th grade declined.
- Science results were split with 5th grade declining offset by an improving 8th grade.

Achieve Hartford! recognizes these types of gains can only be the result of strong execution on the ground and encourages the community to celebrate the work of teachers, principals, parents, students and the district staff who are collectively responsible for the results.

"Going forward, the School District, the Board of Education and entire community must be committed to continuing those aspects of the reform that are driving the results, which include a commitment to aggressively turning around low-performing schools, building a diverse portfolio of small schools with great teachers, and incorporating school level accountability for results," said Starr. "The next phase of school reform will center on developing strategies to sustain this growth while ensuring areas still needing improvement are addressed"

Achieve Hartford! is an independent, nonprofit organization of business and community leaders that focuses on student achievement and supporting effective and sustained school reform in the Hartford Public Schools. For more information on school reform and Achieve Hartford! please visit www.AchieveHartford.org.

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