

Great Ideas for Great Public Schools

CONNECTICUT

Schools get more autonomy, make impressive gains

The **CommPACT model** is the first to give existing public schools autonomy in governance, budgeting, and curriculum. The name symbolizes the commitment to collaboration of the partners in this endeavor: community members, parents, administrators, students, and teachers and their representatives. All parties share in decision making at eight neighborhood schools in Bridgeport, Hartford, Waterbury, and New Haven. With the support of the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education, CommPACT schools are working collaboratively to increase student learning and close achievement gaps. The 2010-11 school year is the program's third year. A school that reorganizes as a CommPACT school does not cost the district more—it receives the same budget it would have received as a traditional public school.

Background

- The project kicked off in 2009 with \$250,000 from the NEA Foundation, a \$480,000 commitment from the Connecticut state legislature, and a minimum of \$500,000 in seed money and in-kind contributions from the state university.
- In 2010, the NEA Foundation gave the project an additional \$250,000 grant to explore potential sites and expand research.

Student achievement rises

- Scores on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) have risen by percentages in the double digits at Barnum Elementary School and Longfellow Elementary School in Bridgeport—Barnum students' math scores rose by 59 percent last year alone.
- More than 85 percent of the students at Washington Elementary School in Waterbury reached proficiency level on the latest CMT.

- A \$475,000 investment from the state of Connecticut has attracted dollars from 10 state and national philanthropies impressed with CommPACT's early record of success and potential to transform public schools.
- State officials credit the new CommPACT-driven literacy program for upgrading the status of West Side Middle School in Waterbury to "safe harbor."

Suspensions decline

- At West Side Middle School, out-of-school suspensions declined by 12 percent and in-school suspensions by 18 percent between the 2008-09 school year and the 2009-10 school year.
- Counselors at West Side Middle School review suspension and attendance data weekly, track and monitor any changes in student data, and then implement appropriate interventions.

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Video: *CommPACT Schools—Why Now?* www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1wGRrkInTI

University of Connecticut www.education.uconn.edu/research/compact/



Great Public Schools for Every Student