



# State of the Schools Report

February 26, 2014

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Superintendent

# Mission

*To inspire and prepare all students to realize their potential and enhance our global community.*

High Expectations  
For All Learners

Rigorous &  
Relevant  
Curriculum

Realize  
Student  
Potential

Dynamic  
Teaching

## Realize Student Potential

- Intellectually, physically, & emotionally healthy
- Globally competitive
- Engaged, responsible, informed citizens
- Persistence & effort
- College & career ready

## Rigorous & Relevant Curriculum

- Comprehensive – academic, arts, personal wellness
- Inquiry-based
- 21st century skills
  - Problem solving
  - Communication
  - Critical thinking
  - Adaptability

## High Expectations For All Learners

- Cultivate interests, strengths, & abilities
- Apply varied styles & approaches
- Understand preferred strategies
- Meet individual needs

## Dynamic Teaching

- Student centered
- Skillful
- Data-driven
- Engaging
- Reflective & Collaborative
- Personalized

## Our Core Values

- Set high standards
- Provide a safe environment
- Promote collaboration
- Embrace diversity
- Encourage intellectual risk taking
- Integrate technology effectively
- Demand integrity
- Support partnerships between home & school
- Foster personal wellness
- Inspire creativity & innovation
- Make all decisions in the best interests of students

## District Goals

**Goal One:** Advance achievement for all students and reduce disparity between and among groups.

**Goal Two:** Nurture the intellectual, physical and emotional well-being of students and create a safe and respectful learning community where all students are held to high expectations.

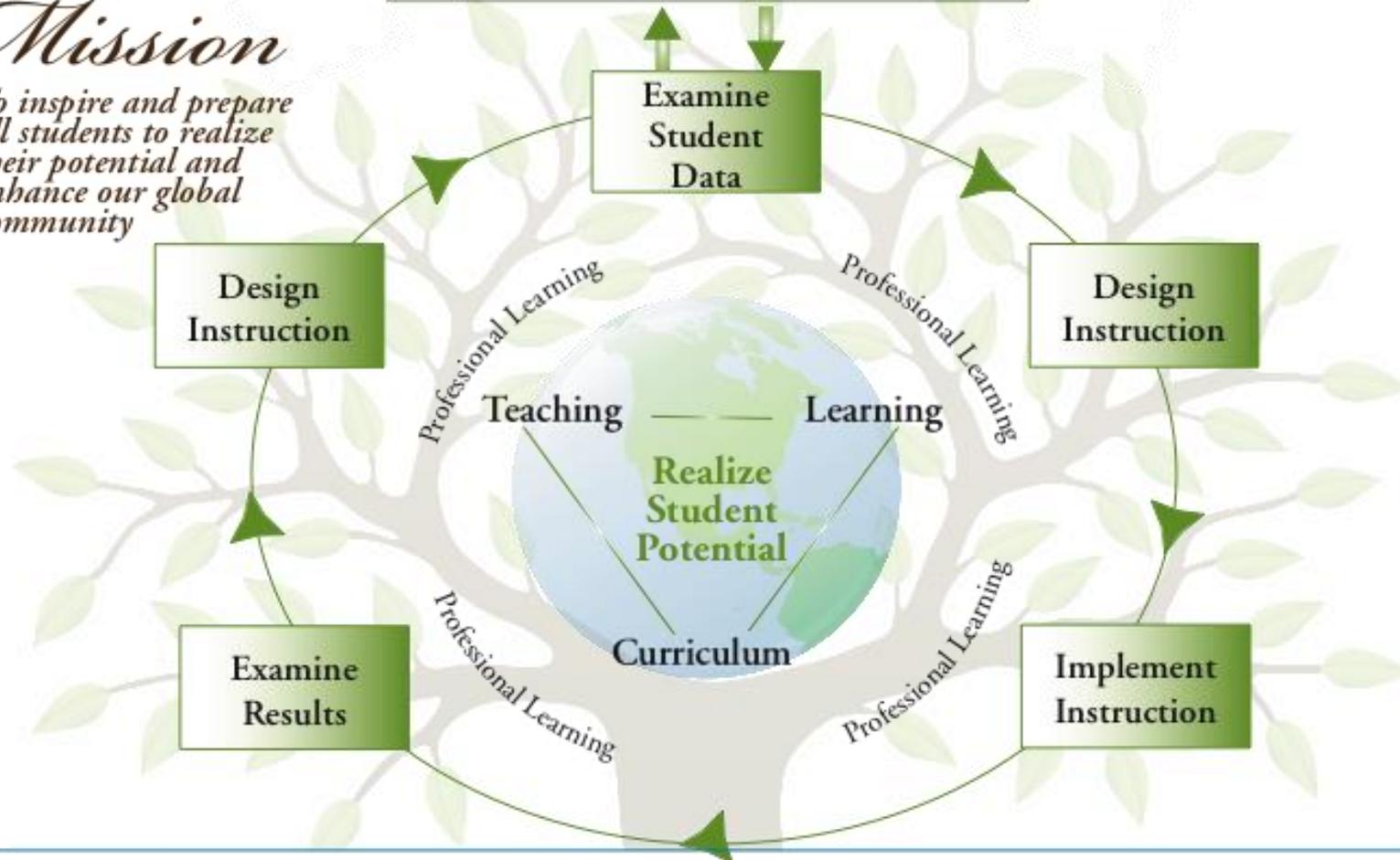
**Goal Three:** Attract, retain and develop high quality staff by providing professional development, resources and appropriate learning environments.

# Model of Continuous Improvement

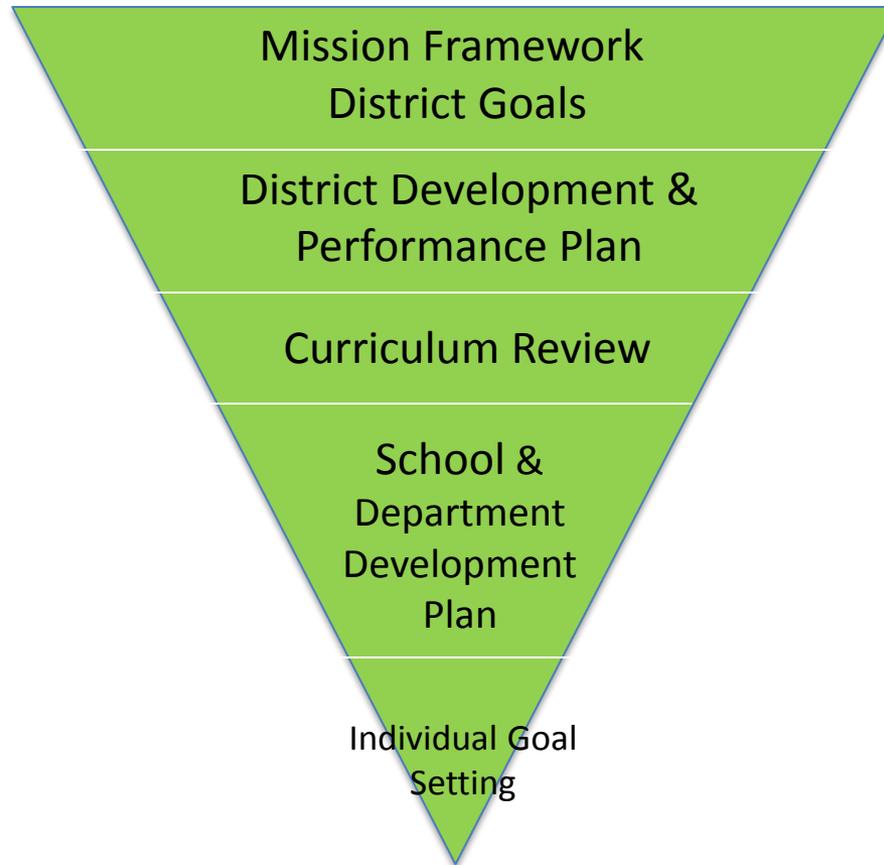


## Mission

*To inspire and prepare all students to realize their potential and enhance our global community*



To prepare & inspire all students to realize their potential and enhance our global community



# State of the Schools 2014



## Time of unprecedented change due to NCLB waiver

- ✓ New Standards
- ✓ New Curriculum
- ✓ Enhanced Instructional Strategies
- ✓ State tests – field testing
- ✓ Data collection and reporting –  
metrics we've used in the past are  
no longer valid

# State of the Schools 2014

Time of unprecedented change

Due to NCLB waiver

- ✓ New system for evaluating teachers and administrators
  - ✓ Data management system for evaluation documents



# State of the Schools 2014

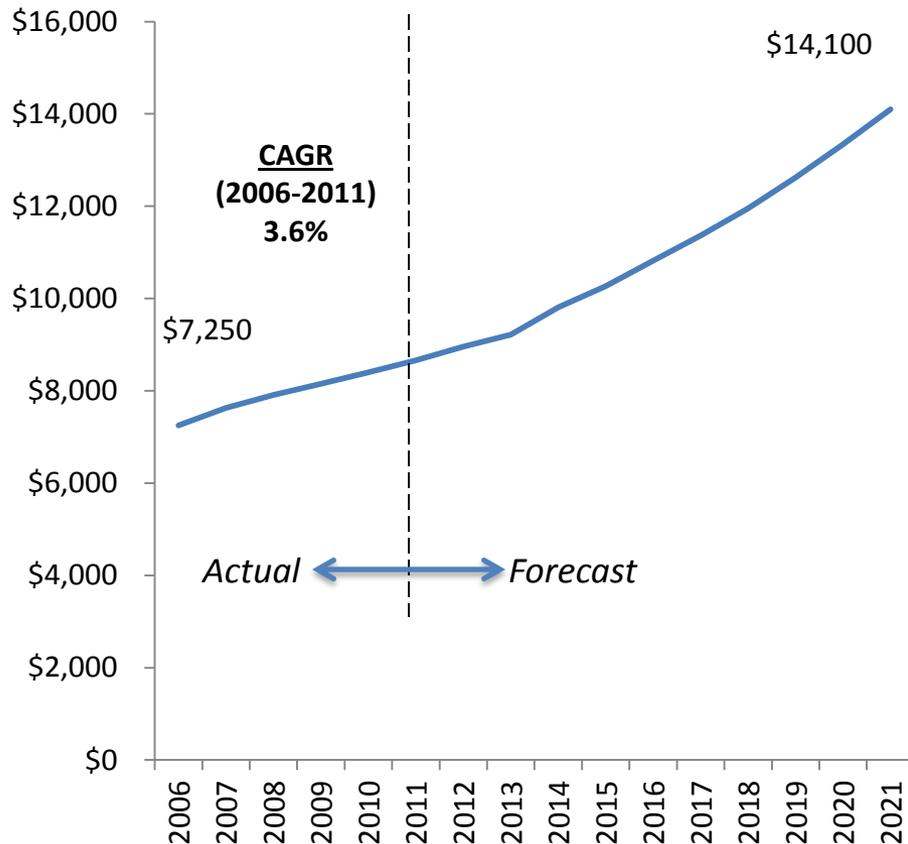
## Impact of 12.14.12 – Newtown

- ✓ New Security Measures
- ✓ Increased attention to Mental Health Needs
- ✓ Increased costs - \$1M in CIP

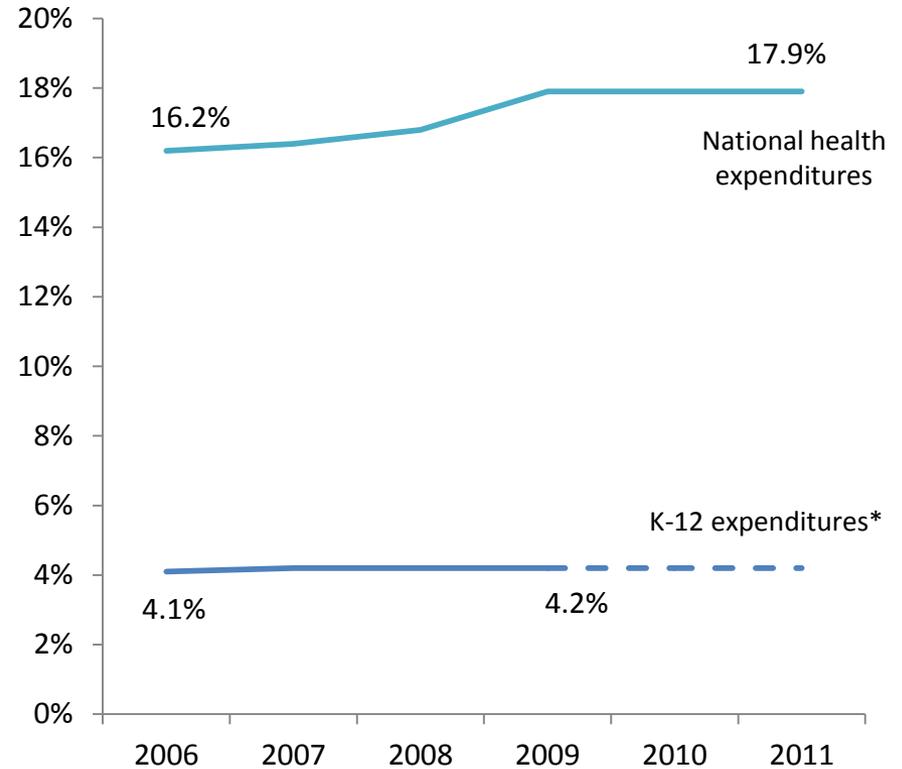


# Healthcare expenditures are forecast to consume an ever-increasing part of our economy.

**National Health Expenditures Per Capita, in Dollars**



**Historical National Health and K-12 Expenditures as a Percent of Gross Domestic Product**

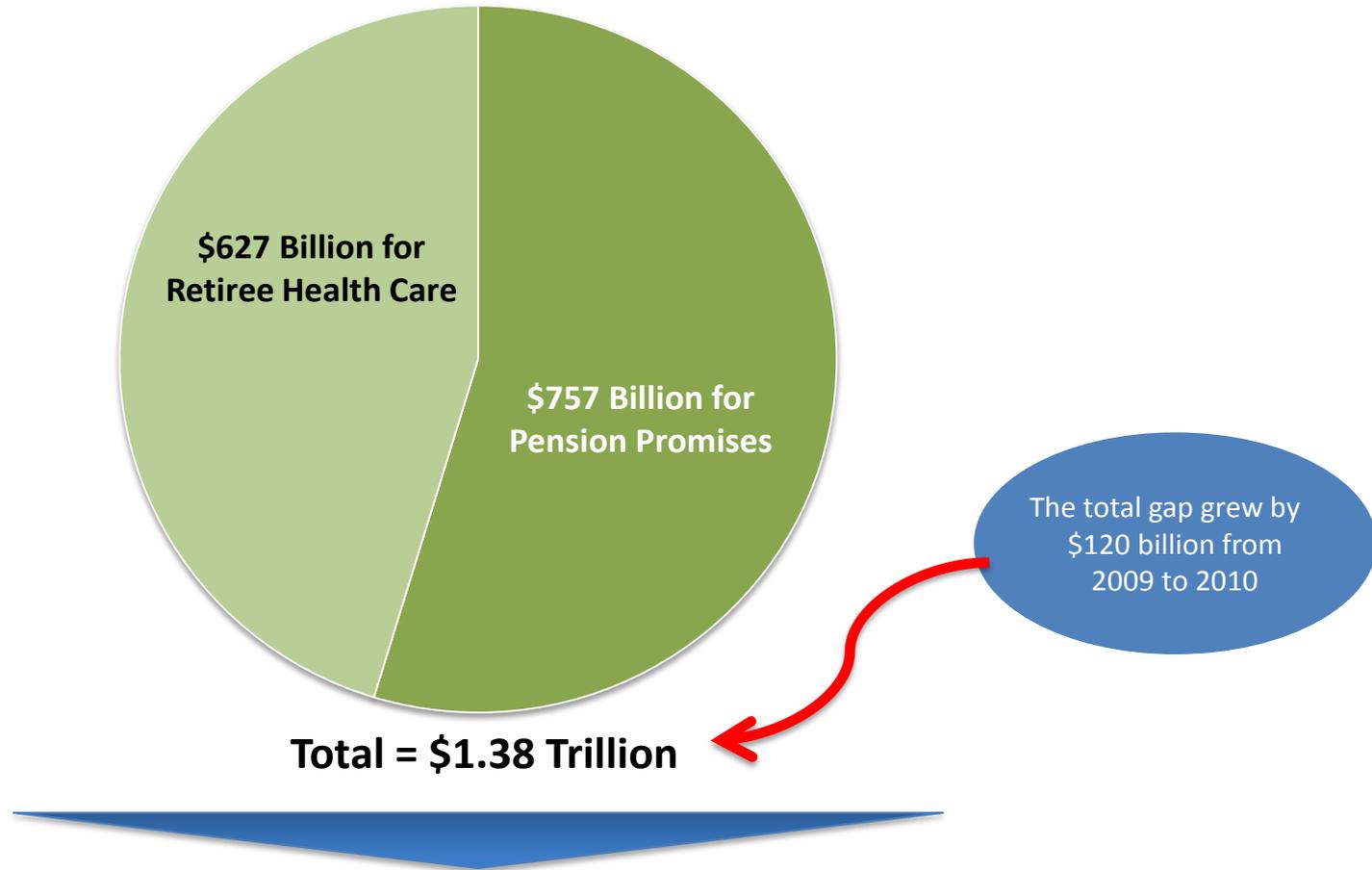


Note: Years 2010, 2011 not yet available for K-12 expenditures, estimated by DMC

Source: Center for Medicare and Medicaid; National Health Expenditure Projections 2011-2021, NCES

State and local governments are struggling with unfunded retiree obligations, which may ultimately be paid through operating dollars.

### State Unfunded Gap for Retirement Benefits, 2010

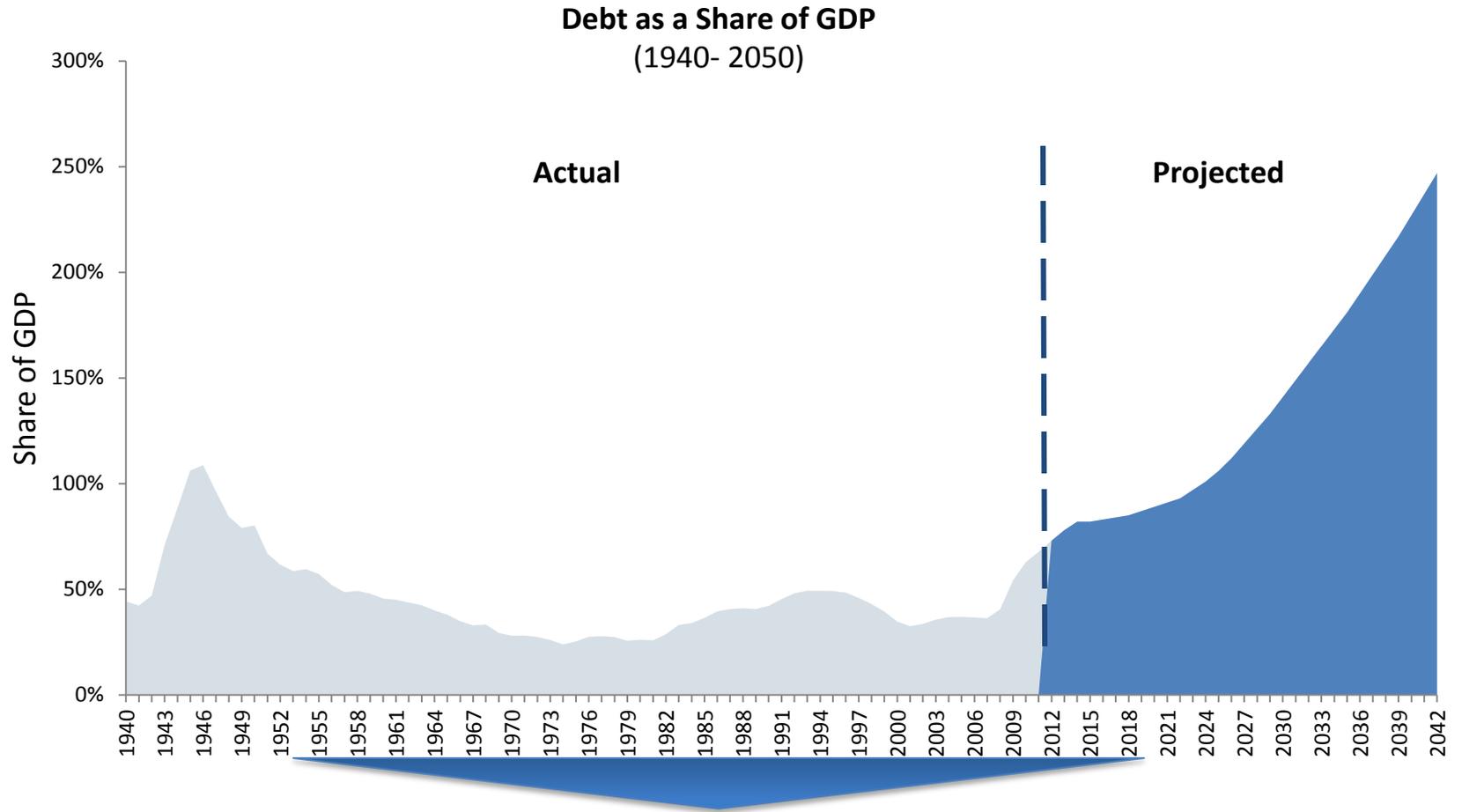


**Pension and retiree health obligations are likely to place increasing financial strain on districts for the foreseeable future.**

Note: 2010 is the most recent year with data available for all 50 states

Source: Pew Center on the States, 2012, State Budget Crisis Task Force

Overall, rising federal debt means that the federal government will have fewer resources available to allocate to K-12 education.



**Dramatic growth in debt as a percent of GDP has broad repercussions for the government's ability to fund other obligations due to increased debt service.**

In the coming years, districts will not enjoy the same level of financial support from federal, state, and local sources.

## Source of District Funds

Federal



State



Local



### Major Competition for Funds

1. Rising **healthcare** costs
2. Rising **pension** costs
3. Rising **federal debt**
4. Decreasing **tax receipts**

### Implication

Each major funding source faces similar pressures, with voters unlikely to support tax increases.

# What have we done to reduce the town's long term liability?

- Moved from defined benefit to defined contribution for non-certified staff (certified staff are in the state pension system)
- Increased employee contribution to medical costs
- Eliminated sick leave payout upon retirement for recently hired teachers



# How are we doing?

- Both high schools in the top 10 in the state in US News and World Report rankings
- Highest AP participation and Advanced ranking by College Board/Innovation School District
- Our schools are safe/we have a plan for making them more secure/our families and staff are not alone



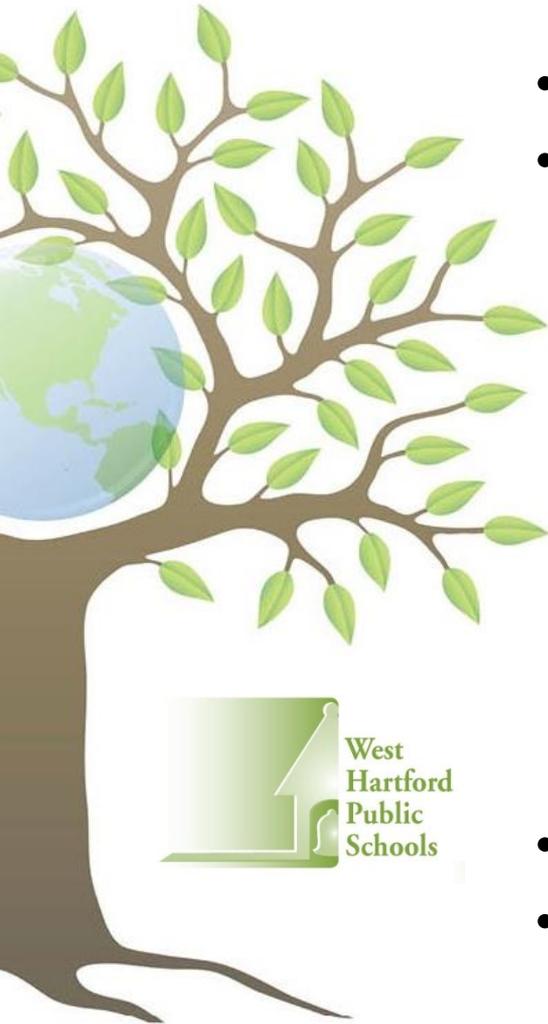
# How are we doing?

## Award winning schools and educators

- Bugbee - National Blue Ribbon School
- National Social Studies Teacher of the Year
- Two Connecticut Teachers of the Year in 5 years
- Connecticut's finalist for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST)
- Connecticut Elementary School Social Studies Teacher of the Year
- Connecticut School Psychologist of the Year



# District Development & Performance Plan



- **Elements of Plan tied to District Goals**
- **District Strategic Actions**
  - ✓ Using the Model of Continuous Improvement, we will strengthen standards, curriculum, instruction & assessment
  - ✓ Create an environment & community that fosters intellectually, physically & emotionally healthy learning and living
  - ✓ Create the conditions that promote collaborative inquiry through shared and distributed leadership
- **Efforts**
- **Performance Indicators**

# Considerations for the Future

- **Reduce the Opportunity Gap**

- ✓ Expand PK to all elementary schools – **Earlier is Better**

- **Facilities**

- ✓ Continue upgrades of windows, doors, HVAC systems and masonry
- ✓ Prepare a plan for interior painting of all buildings
- ✓ Upgrade high school science labs
- ✓ Upgrade auditoriums



# Considerations for the Future

- **Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment**
  - ✓ Continue to refine and enhance new curriculum units based on standards
  - ✓ Develop instructional coaches from our teaching ranks to support varied learning strategies and best practices in classrooms
  - ✓ Be explicit regarding academic mindset
  - ✓ Apply K-3 social, emotional, and intellectual habits to curriculum, link to 21<sup>st</sup> century skills



# Considerations for the Future

- **Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment**

- ✓ Develop more options for Capstone Projects and ensure all students complete one prior to graduation
- ✓ Implement competency-based credits (after state guidelines are available)
- ✓ Plan for 2020 change in high school graduation requirements (after state guidelines are available)
- ✓ Aim for transfer of agency – “The future is about learning, its not about schooling.” We need to reduce the boundaries, shift the roll of adults towards students. R.Elmore



# Considerations for the Future

- **Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment**

- ✓ Create tighter alignment of curriculum with Smarter Balanced Assessments and use interim assessment bank
- ✓ Determine benchmarks for schools based on 2015-16 Smarter Balanced Assessments
- ✓ Keep an eye on measuring what is valued instead of valuing only what can be easily measured.
- ✓ Maintain a growth mindset



# Considerations for the Future

## • **Teacher & Administrator Evaluation**

- ✓ The current model is over engineered
- ✓ The current model relies too heavily on data with no empirical evidence that this approach will improve learning
- ✓ Standardized testing should not be high stakes
- ✓ Support moving away from teacher/administrator ratings
- ✓ Continue to develop expertise relative to what excellent teaching looks like
- ✓ Continue to diligently implement the non-tenure review process



# Considerations for the Future

- **Hiring & Development**

- ✓ Continue to develop leaders through the Leadership Academy
- ✓ Continue to strive to hire the highest quality teachers that reflect the diversity of our student body
- ✓ Ensure that the WHPS attract the best and brightest by providing leadership pathways, professional learning opportunities, support and regionally competitive salaries



# District Development & Performance Plan

- **Healthy schools and communities**

- ✓ Adhere to principles of equity and excellence
- ✓ Expand community partnerships and support
  - ✓ **Growing Great Schools**
  - ✓ **Hello West Hartford**
  - ✓ **Foundation for WHPS**
  - ✓ **Parent Leadership Training Institute**
  - ✓ **Great by 8**
  - ✓ **The Bridge**
- ✓ Support walking and biking to/from school
- ✓ Maintain strong connection with Town government



# What resources are needed?

- We are ranked 109<sup>th</sup> in per pupil spending in the state
- ECS is \$38 million below what it should be
- Excess cost is \$1 million below what it should be
- Next budget looks to maintain the key programs that have contributed to our success to date
- Healthcare and pension costs are rising



