



Commissioner's Network Timeline and Summary Events

Schools classified as Category 4 or Category 5 are eligible to apply for the planning year

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Deadline	Action
March, 2019	CSDE releases the Commissioner's Network Expression of Interest Application form.
April, 2019	DMS submitted completed Expression of Interest Application to CSDE.
June, 2019	CSDE selected DMS for participation in a Commissioner's Network planning year.
July, 2019	DMS submitted an application to participate in the Commissioner's Network. Essays, data, artifacts, documents from school
October, 2019	CSDE conducted initial audit at DMS selected for possible participation in a Commissioner's Network planning year.
December, 2019 - February, 2020	DMS Turnaround Committee drafts proposed Turnaround Plan for Talent, Academics, Culture/Climate and Operations
March 2, 2020	DMS submitted completed Turnaround Plan to CSDE • 10 schools submitted applications (largest number in one year) • CSDE site visit planned on March 20, 2020 (walkthrough, classroom observations, review of progress toward key initiatives) • Application review process (Turnaround Office -- Commissioner of Education)
May- June 2020	Selected schools present plans to the State Board of Education for approval, pending legislative authorization.



Describe the process to ensure an exceptional school principal with a track record of success, preferably in school turnaround and/or an urban school environment, is in place.

Derby Middle School has selected an exceptional school principal with a track record of success in a range of school and district leadership roles to lead the turnaround work at DMS. Rachael Caggiano began serving as Principal of Derby Middle School in July 2018. She was chosen from a competitive applicant pool of over 30 candidates by a diverse selection committee comprised of teachers, parents, students, school leaders, central office administrators, and board of education members. The interview process was rigorous and included a series of questions to identify turnaround leadership competencies, a hands-on performance task to demonstrate effective communication, and an informal Q&A session led by students. Mrs. Caggiano was the committee's top choice for the position.

Prior to being appointed as the Derby Middle School Principal, Mrs. Caggiano was a highly respected leader in the district, who held multiple roles at Derby High School and Central Office. She began her career with Derby Public Schools in 2011 as a Special Education Resource teacher and Learning Center Life Skills teacher at Derby High School. In July 2013, she was promoted to Secondary Supervisor of Special Education for grades 6-12+ where she was responsible for overseeing programming for 225 students with IEP's, 504's and out-of-district placement, supervising 27 pupil personnel staff, managing state reporting databases, and developing a departmental budget. When an opportunity arose at Derby High School in July 2015, Mrs. Caggiano was recruited for the Assistant Principal/Athletic Director position. During her tenure, Mrs. Caggiano led the implementation of the School Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) with a goal of building the school's capacity to establish a continuum of academic and behavioral support. As Athletic Director, she was responsible for overseeing athletics at both Derby Middle School and Derby High School. She supervised 20 coaches and approximately 160 student-athletes participating in 19 varsity/junior varsity programs. She was an active committee member for a large scale, community project responsible for building a \$21 million Fieldhouse and Athletic Field Complex consisting of a new track, multipurpose football/soccer field and a multipurpose baseball/softball field. She held this highly visible, hands-on role successfully for three years before being appointed Principal at Derby Middle School.

Mrs. Caggiano has a strong background in special education, tiered interventions, and understands how to provide personalized support to exceptional learners. She was trained in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, Boys Town Behavioral Model, Physical & Psychological Management Training (PMT), and Risking Connections while employed in two private, special education facilities. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Special Education, a Masters of Science in Special Education (Emotional Disabilities), and 6th Year in Educational Leadership. Mrs. Caggiano is an active member of the district's Professional Development, Evaluation and Assessment Committee (PDEC), TEAM Beginning Teacher Program, and District Attendance Team. Over the past two years, she has participated in a wide range of professional learning, including: High Quality Instruction (HQI) Strategy Mapping, Portrait of a Graduate, Creating Safe, Equitable, and Engaging Schools, Chronic Absenteeism Peer Learning Network, EdSight Secure & Early Indicator Tool (EIT) Training, Teaching and Learning with Illustrative Math (Grades 6-8), Accountable Conversations: Keys to Effective Change, Contemporary School Law Issues, and Student Disciplinary Offense Data Collection (ED166).



Over the past nine years in the district, Mrs. Caggiano has worked tirelessly to create lasting relationships with all stakeholders. Her ability to connect positively with staff, students, parents, and community members has made her transition as Derby Middle School's Principal seamless and successful. According to the Commissioner's Network Operations and Instructional Audit Report conducted in October 2019 by the CT State Department of Education, the teacher focus group participants shared that "one of the school's greatest strengths is the school principal as she is positive and energetic, and has great relationships with students and families and it motivates teachers to live up to that example." The report also indicated that the Parent Focus Group participants "praised the principal's responsiveness to any concerns and her friendly, engaging demeanor." The relationships, which are built on trust, are a key lever for helping Principal Caggiano create the right conditions for instructional leadership needed to accelerate change and manage resistance. The results of the school climate survey administered in December 2019 is convincing evidence of Principal Caggiano's clear vision, high expectations, commitment to feedback, clear communication, and positive relationships with stakeholders:

- **91% of staff members** agree or strongly agree that, "The principal sets a clear vision for the school."
- **90% of staff members** agree or strongly agree that, "My principal provides me with useful and timely feedback on my practice."
- **85% of staff members** agree or strongly agree that, "The principal recognizes teachers/staff for a job well-done."
- **98% of staff members** agree or strongly agree that, "The principal communicates regularly and effectively with staff."
- **96% of staff members** agree or strongly agree that, "I feel supported by my administrator."
- **94% of staff members** agree or strongly agree that, "the principal maintains a positive rapport and good working relationship with staff."
- **91% of parents** agree or strongly agree that, "The principal sets high expectations for learning at this school."

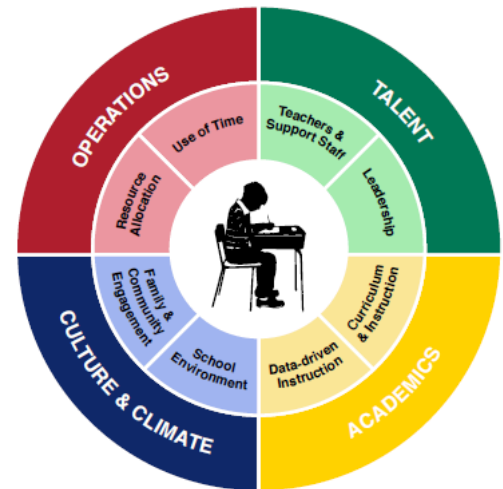
The district has complete confidence that Mrs. Caggiano possesses the leadership competencies and sense of urgency necessary to be a highly effective turnaround principal. To accelerate the comprehensive school change reflected in this plan, the district will also provide support to Principal Caggiano with embedded coaching/mentoring, individualized professional development opportunities.



Turnaround Framework for School Improvement

The Commissioner's Network Plan is based upon the framework centered around four key overarching and research-based leverage points for school improvement: Talent, Academics, Culture and Climate, and Operations (TACO). Each of these domains play an integral role in the realization of school's goals to increase student outcomes.

- **Talent:** Systems and strategies to recruit, hire, develop, evaluate, and retain excellent school leaders, teachers, and support staff.
- **Academics:** Rigorous, aligned, and engaging academic program that allows all students to achieve at high levels, including aligned curricula, instruction, and assessments.
- **Culture and Climate:** Positive learning environment that supports high-quality teaching and learning, and engages families and the community as partners in the educational process.
- **Operations:** Systems and processes that promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including through the use of time and financial resources.



Talent ● Develop an instructional coaching model to increase teacher capacity and effectiveness ● Strengthen the teacher evaluation process and professional learning culture	Academics ● Implement a rigorous curriculum that is aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards to ensure all students are college and career ready ● Develop a tiered SRBI model for early, targeted intervention to ensure success for all students
Culture and Climate ● Implement the PBIS model with fidelity to improve behavior and decrease rates of suspension/expulsion ● Establish a school culture focused on achievement and engage families as partners in their children's learning	Operations ● Create school structures and systems that maximize instructional time and create extended learning opportunities

