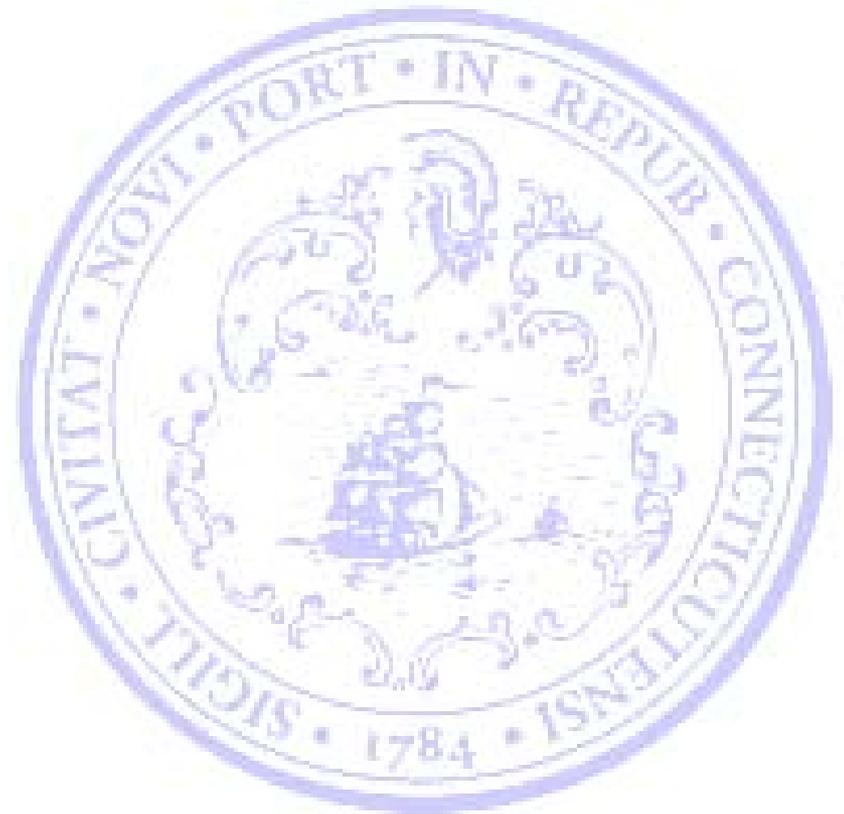




# New Haven Public Schools

## THE *PORTFOLIO SCHOOLS* INITIATIVE



**DRAFT** 4/29/09

Subject to continual revision

# Executive Summary

## How do we move from incremental to exponential success?

- We have enjoyed significant improvements in student outcomes district-wide, but recognize that there is much more to be done to ensure all New Haven students receive a high-quality education.
- To achieve this ambition– and in turn, become **the best urban district in the nation**– we are focused on creating a portfolio of effective, diverse and empowered schools through four key district-wide strategies:
  1. **High expectations, accountability and earned autonomy.**
  2. **High-quality, motivated principals and teachers.**
  3. **A portfolio approach to schools where the Board of Education and central office provides differentiated and efficient supports.**
  4. **Engaged students, families and community.**
- We are launching a reform effort now, but recognize that transformation of the entire district will take 6-8 years, to which we are fully committed.



# We Have Enjoyed Significant Improvements and Momentum On Which We Can Build

- Impressive gains for the second year for grades 3-8 students on CMT.
  - ✓ **Nine schools** made safe harbor, three of the nine schools were in the Restructuring Stage of AYP.
  - ✓ #1 in its district reference group in math, reading, and science.
  - ✓ Increases for cohorts at **every grade level in Reading & Math.**
- High Schools posted the best gains in the District CAPT scores ever.
  - ✓ **9% increase in Reading** and **11% increase in Writing** in the District.
  - ✓ Gains in 11 out of 12 test scores in the city's 3 largest high schools, and **11 Double digit gains** throughout the High Schools.
- High School rigor is enabling college readiness.
  - ✓ **82.3%** of graduates matriculated to 2 and 4 year colleges.
  - ✓ **Over 500 students** are taking AP courses – students scoring 3 or higher in AP exams increase by **73%** since 2003.
- Largest school choice program in the state accepting almost 2000 students (10% of the total enrollment) from 23 suburban communities.
- School Attendance is up and dropout rate has been cut in half (4-year rate is 15.3%).

# Burning Platform

- While New Haven is moving in the right direction, we still have too many dropouts. Every high school dropout we have in the City of New Haven earns \$28,000 less per year than their peers who make it through college. Over a lifetime, this equals to \$1.5 million for each dropout. Our communities are most affected. Researchers at UC Berkeley recently estimated that a 10% boost in high school graduation rates in a given community would cut auto theft rates by 13% and murders and assaults by 20%.
- The Obama Administration and the State Department of Education are leading the education reform movement. The President and Secretary of Education are preparing to close or consolidate schools that fail to make AYP, fail to progress on state assessments in mathematics and ELA, and they are considering lifting the cap that states have to reconstitute public schools into charters. The State of Connecticut understands money will go to those states who are ready to reform and Governor Rell just signed a pledge to deliver a whole series of education reforms
- Connecticut's achievement gap between poor and non-poor students is one of the largest in the nation in every category. Some might think this is because Connecticut's wealthier students are doing well, but in reality the state's non-poor students rank only in the middle of the pack by the time they reach eighth grade. Rather, Connecticut's worst-in-the-nation achievement gap is driven by the extremely low performance of the state's low-income students.
- "Non-poor African American and Latino students score higher than their poor counterparts, but they still perform significantly below non-poor white students. In fact, poor white students score 1.2 points higher than non-poor African American students in elementary school, 2.6 points higher in middle school, and 6.8 points higher in high school."



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# Our Best Schools, Which Share 6 Common Attributes, Are a Source of Strength

## **CHALLENGE: HOW TO TURN SUCCESS IN INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS DISTRICT-WIDE?**

- Never make excuses and are never satisfied.
- Have high-caliber strategic school leaders.
- Set high goals and pursue them relentlessly.
- Have a demanding, engaging curriculum for all students.
- Have more student time on task.
- Have motivated staff who constantly evaluate, compare, and challenge themselves.

# Why New Haven?

- Strong, stable and aligned leadership in the District and City.
- Manageable size and scope– with 47 schools and 20,000 students.
- Robust center for top talent within Connecticut, given cluster of universities, including Yale University, Teach for America, and many others.
- Dramatic investment in school construction– with nearly all school buildings replaced or gut rehabbed and modernized .
- Demonstrated ability to deliver incremental improvements in achievement.
- SchoolNet<sup>®</sup>: Key academic tracking, measurement and intervention tool in place.
- Strong track record of attracting suburban students to city schools.

**NEW HAVEN IS UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO ACHIEVE  
THESE AMBITIOUS GOALS BECAUSE IT HAS EVERY  
FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS**



# We Aspire to Deliver High-Quality Education for All Students in New Haven, and Become Best U.S. Urban District

**Aspiration:** Gap-closing student achievement scores- where all students (regardless of background), receive substantially better life-opportunities through accelerated academic and personal growth.

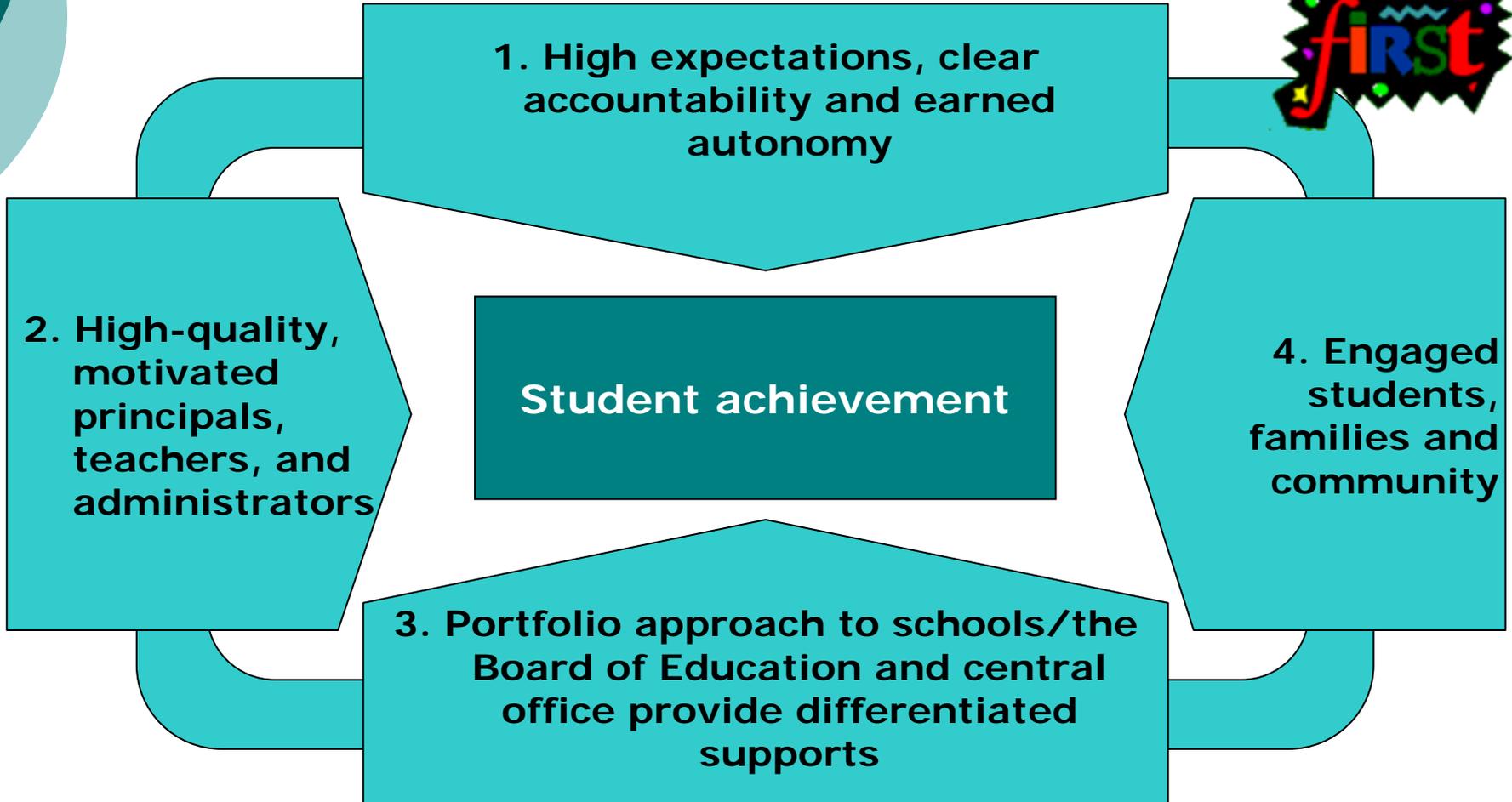
- **BRING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT TO SCALE** -

## Key goals, 2009-15

- Increase student achievement annually so as to close the district-wide achievement gap with CT state averages.
  - CMT Projected Gains
    - 29.6% in Math
    - 28.0% in Reading
    - 18.1% in Writing
  - CAPT Projected Gains
    - 38.6% in Math
    - 28.6% in Reading
    - 35.5% in Writing
- Improve student and parent satisfaction with New Haven Public Schools, including increasing the attraction of out-of-district students by 20%.
- Decrease the dropout rate.
- Increase college enrollment by 10% and monitor the 4- and 5-year college graduation rate to a 10% increase from 2009-15.



# To Achieve These Goals, We Will Adopt Four Integrated Strategies Designed to Produce Great Student Achievement





# 1. High Expectations, Accountability and Earned Autonomy

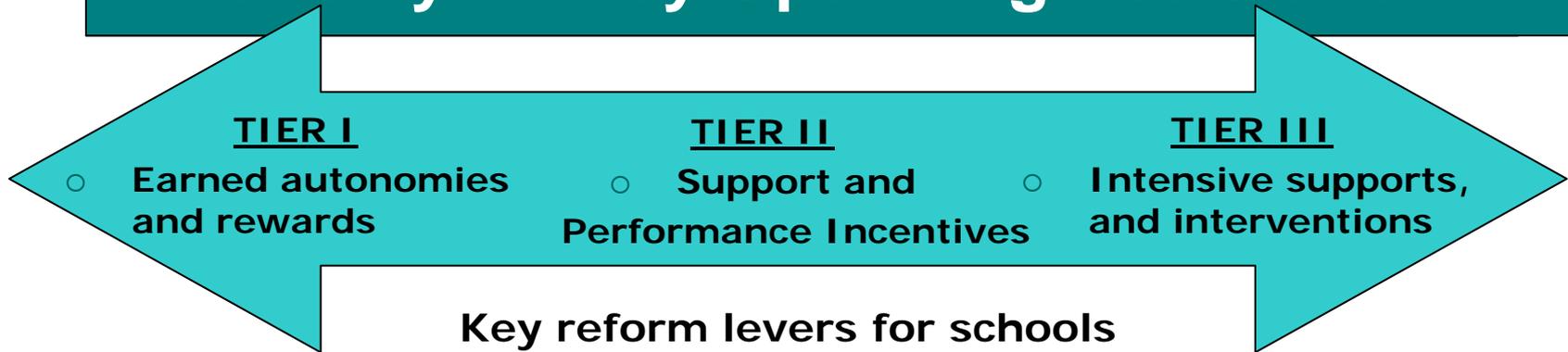
**Vision:** All schools are managed under a common accountability framework, which sets rigorous and appropriate expectations for all schools to succeed and improve, and provides aligned incentives.

## Key strategies

- Establish performance expectations aligned with state standards, and measure performance of all schools, based on measures of absolute student achievement (% proficient), annual progress (increase in % proficient from last year), and qualitative measures (e.g., school environment, attendance).
- For each tier of school performance, establish and widely publish a clear framework of aligned rewards and consequences:
  - **Top tier.** Schools with track record of high-performance will enjoy substantial autonomy on key strategic and operational decisions.
  - **Middle Tier.** Majority of our schools will receive high-quality support from central office, as well as performance incentives to improve performance to “top tier”.
  - **Bottom tier.** Low-performing schools with potential for improvement will receive intensive support from central-office based intervention team, headed by turnaround experts. Select schools, which are lowest-performing and not improving will be closed or phased out every year. In their place, reconstituted public schools and charter schools enjoying autonomy of “top tier” schools.



# Based on Performance Tiers, Individual Schools Would Enjoy Differential Levels of Autonomy on Key Operating Decisions



## Key reform levers for schools

- Choice of curricular and instructional program and approaches.
- Control over school-based staffing and performance evaluations.
- Control over key non-academic operating decisions and budgets.
- Structure and length of school day.
- Receipt of financial and non-financial performance incentives.