

**STRATEGIC SCHOOL PROFILE 2008-09****Common Ground High School District**

OLIVER D. BARTON, Director  
Telephone: (203) 389-4333

Location: 358 Springside Avenue  
New Haven,  
Connecticut

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This profile was produced by the Connecticut State Department of Education in accordance with CT General Statutes 10-220(c) using data and narratives provided by the school district, testing services, or the US Census. Profiles and additional education data, including longitudinal data, are available on the internet at [www.sde.ct.gov](http://www.sde.ct.gov).

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**COMMUNITY DATA**

County: New Haven	Per Capita Income in 2000: N/A
Town Population in 2000: N/A	Percent of Adults without a High School Diploma in 2000*: N/A
1990-2000 Population Growth: N/A	Percent of Adults Who Were Not Fluent in English in 2000*: N/A
Number of Public Schools: 1	District Enrollment as % of Estimated. Student Population: N/A

\*To view the Adult Education Program Profiles online, go to [www.sde.ct.gov](http://www.sde.ct.gov) and click on Adult Education, then Reports.

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District Reference Group (DRG): N/A

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**STUDENT ENROLLMENT**

Enrollment on October 1, 2008	155
5-Year Enrollment Change	37.2%

**DISTRICT GRADE RANGE**

Grade Range	9-12
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**INDICATORS OF EDUCATIONAL NEED**

Need Indicator	Number in District	Percent		
		District	DRG	State
Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Meals	105	67.7	N/A	30.3
K-12 Students Who Are Not Fluent in English	8	5.2	N/A	5.2
Students Identified as Gifted and/or Talented	0	0.0	N/A	4.0
PK-12 Students Receiving Special Education Services in District	26	16.8	N/A	11.4
Kindergarten Students who Attended Preschool, Nursery School or Headstart	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Homeless	0	0.0	N/A	0.2
Juniors and Seniors Working 16 or More Hours Per Week	12	22.6	N/A	19.0

## SCHOOL DISTRICT DIVERSITY

Student Race/Ethnicity		
Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent
American Indian	0	0.0
Asian American	1	0.6
Black	71	45.8
Hispanic	57	36.8
White	26	16.8
Total Minority	129	83.2

**Percent of Minority Professional Staff:** 5.9%

**Non-English Home Language:** 9.7% of this district's students (excluding prekindergarten students) come from homes where English is not the primary language. The number of non-English home languages is 2.

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### EFFORTS TO REDUCE RACIAL, ETHNIC, AND ECONOMIC ISOLATION

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Below is the description submitted by this school of how it provides educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from diverse racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.

As a charter school, COMMON GROUND works to be part of the solution to racial, ethnic, and economic isolation in Connecticut. Applications from suburban towns comprised 30 % of all applications received as of the New Haven lottery date this year.

Our parent organization, The New Haven Ecology Project Inc, provides weekend workshops and activities for the greater community on issues of health, nutrition and environmental concerns. The Common Ground Summer Camp affords Common Ground student counselors experience with an ethnically and economically diverse population.

Our students have been involved in the Peabody Museum's Evolutions program, CT Envirothon competition, medical mentoring programs at Yale, service learning opportunities, a youth philanthropy board, and conferences on environmental careers. Our students also have interactions with diverse ethnic and economic groups through junior job shadows, and senior projects, which require off-site interviews and service. The school program encourages these connections and fosters, internally, close and positive interaction among students of all backgrounds.

We have several significant obstacles in our quest for a more diverse student body. Unlike interdistrict magnets or open choice schools, we do not receive state funds to provide transportation to students outside of the city. We have raised private and foundation funds for our school building, of which we are proud, but we still do not have many of the facilities which people have come to expect in a large comprehensive high school.

Our latest strategies for increasing non-minority and suburban participation include increasing middle school after-school programming opportunities for students both inter and intra-district, enhancing the quality of our arts program through a collaboration with a local Shakespeare company, and targeting fundraising towards technology and equipment. We have also continued to consult with a parent focus group comprising parents of students in our non-school day environmental programs and significantly expand partnerships with Yale, SCSU, and UNH.

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## STUDENT PERFORMANCE

**Connecticut Mastery Test, Fourth Generation, % Meeting State Goal.** The Goal level is more demanding than the Proficient level, but not as high as the Advanced level, reported in the No Child Left Behind Report Cards.

Grade and CMT Subject Area	District	State	% of Districts in State with Equal or Lower Percent Meeting Goal
Grade 3 Reading	N/A	N/A	N/A
Writing	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 4 Reading	N/A	N/A	N/A
Writing	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 5 Reading	N/A	N/A	N/A
Writing	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	N/A
Science	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 6 Reading	N/A	N/A	N/A
Writing	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 7 Reading	N/A	N/A	N/A
Writing	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 8 Reading	N/A	N/A	N/A
Writing	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	N/A
Science	N/A	N/A	N/A

These results reflect the performance of students with scoreable tests who were enrolled in the district at the time of testing, regardless of the length of time they were enrolled in the district. Results for fewer than 20 students are not presented.

For more detailed CMT results, go to [www.ctreports.com](http://www.ctreports.com).

To see the NCLB Report Card for this school, go to [www.sde.ct.gov](http://www.sde.ct.gov) and click on “No Child Left Behind.”

**Connecticut Academic Performance Test, Third Generation, % Meeting State Goal.** The CAPT is administered to Grade 10 students. The Goal level is more demanding than the state Proficient level, but not as high as the Advanced level, reported in the No Child Left Behind Report Cards. The following results reflect the performance of students with scoreable tests who were enrolled in the school at the time of testing, regardless of the length of time they were enrolled in the school. Results for fewer than 20 students are not presented.

CAPT Subject Area	District	State	% of Districts in State with Equal or Lower Percent Meeting Goal
Reading Across the Disciplines	11.8	47.4	3.8
Writing Across the Disciplines	13.2	55.0	2.3
Mathematics	11.3	47.8	4.6
Science	7.4	42.8	3.1

For more detailed CAPT results, go to [www.ctreports.com](http://www.ctreports.com).

To see the NCLB Report Card for this school, go to [www.sde.ct.gov](http://www.sde.ct.gov) and click on “No Child Left Behind.”

**Physical Fitness.** The assessment includes tests for flexibility, abdominal strength and endurance, upper-body strength and aerobic endurance.

Physical Fitness: % of Students Reaching Health Standard on All Four Tests	District	State	% of Districts in State with Equal or Lower Percent Reaching Standard
	19.4	36.2	10.0

SAT <sup>®</sup> I: Reasoning Test Class of 2008		District	State	% of Districts in State with Equal or Lower Scores
% of Graduates Tested		75.0	74.5	
Average Score	Mathematics	380	507	2.3
	Critical Reading	388	503	2.3
	Writing	389	506	2.3

**SAT<sup>®</sup> I.** The lowest possible score on each SAT<sup>®</sup> I subtest is 200; the highest possible score is 800.

Graduation and Dropout Rates	District	State	% of Districts in State with Equal or Less Desirable Rates
Graduation Rate, Class of 2008	92.3	92.1	34.4
Cumulative Four-Year Dropout Rate for Class of 2008	1.9	6.6	73.0
2007-08 Annual Dropout Rate for Grade 9 through 12	0.0	2.5	100.0

Activities of Graduates	District	State
% Pursuing Higher Education (Degree and Non-Degree Programs)	83.3	84.1
% Employed (Civilian Employment and in Armed Services)	16.7	11.0

## RESOURCES AND EXPENDITURES

### DISTRICT STAFF

Full-Time Equivalent Count of District Staff	
General Education	
Teachers and Instructors	12.79
Paraprofessional Instructional Assistants	1.00
Special Education	
Teachers and Instructors	1.00
Paraprofessional Instructional Assistants	0.00
Library/Media Specialists and/or Assistants	0.00
Staff Devoted to Adult Education	0.00
Administrators, Coordinators, and Department Chairs	
District Central Office	
School Level	2.00
Instructional Specialists Who Support Teachers (e.g., subject area specialists)	0.00
Counselors, Social Workers, and School Psychologists	0.00
School Nurses	0.00
Other Staff Providing Non-Instructional Services and Support	7.00

In the full-time equivalent (FTE) count, staff members working part-time in the school district are counted as a fraction of full-time. For example, a teacher who works half-time in the district contributes 0.50 to the district's staff count.

Teachers and Instructors	District	DRG	State
Average Years of Experience in Education	5.0	N/A	13.6
% with Master's Degree or Above	60.0	N/A	76.1

Average Class Size	District	DRG	State
Grade K	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 7	N/A	N/A	N/A
High School	16.4	N/A	19.3

Hours of Instruction Per Year*	Dist	DRG	State
Elementary School	N/A	N/A	N/A
Middle School	N/A	N/A	N/A
High School	1,033	N/A	1,007

\*State law requires that at least 900 hours of instruction be offered to students in grade 1-12 and full-day kindergarten, and 450 hours to half-day kindergarten students.

Students Per Academic Computer	Dist	DRG	State
Elementary School*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Middle School	N/A	N/A	N/A
High School	3.0	N/A	2.4

\*Excludes schools with no grades above kindergarten.

## DISTRICT EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES, 2007-08

Expenditures may be supported by local tax revenues, state grants, federal grants, municipal in-kind services, tuition and other sources. DRG and state figures will not be comparable to the district if the school district does not teach both elementary and secondary students.

Expenditures All figures are unaudited.	Total (in 1000s)	Expenditures Per Pupil			
		District	Secondary Districts	DRG	State
Instructional Staff and Services	\$1,071	\$7,045	\$7,913	N/A	\$7,522
Instructional Supplies and Equipment	\$36	\$239	\$320	N/A	\$271
Improvement of Instruction and Educational Media Services	\$20	\$134	\$386	N/A	\$446
Student Support Services	\$60	\$395	\$720	N/A	\$806
Administration and Support Services	\$247	\$1,622	\$1,828	N/A	\$1,369
Plant Operation and Maintenance	\$108	\$709	\$1,517	N/A	\$1,377
Transportation	\$9	N/A	\$788	N/A	\$644
Costs for Students Tuitioned Out	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	\$132	\$866	\$331	N/A	\$151
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,683</b>	<b>\$11,072</b>	<b>\$14,310</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$12,805</b>
<b>Additional Expenditures</b>					
Land, Buildings, and Debt Service	\$0	\$0	\$2,027	N/A	\$1,759

Special Education Expenditures	District Total	Percent of PK-12 Expenditures Used for Special Education		
		District	DRG	State
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Revenue Sources, % of Expenditures from Source.** Revenue sources do not include state funded Teachers' Retirement Board contributions, vocational-technical school operations, SDE budgeted costs for salaries and leadership activities and other state-funded school districts (e.g., Dept. of Children and Families and Dept. of Corrections).

District Expenditures	Local Revenue	State Revenue	Federal Revenue	Tuition & Other
Including School Construction	0.0	77.2	17.9	4.9
Excluding School Construction	0.0	77.2	17.9	4.9

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### EQUITABLE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES AMONG DISTRICT SCHOOLS

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Below is the description submitted by this district of how it allocates resources to insure equity and address needs.

Common Ground is a comprehensive college-preparatory high school whose theme is environmental studies. The school is located on a twenty-acre site within the city of New Haven, surrounded by the 1500-Acre West Rock Ridge State Park. Challenging courses in all key academic disciplines engage students in authentic learning through projects, research, literature, and investigation. Interested, high-performing students complete an advanced Environmental Honors Program and take college classes.

- Environmental Honors Program for advanced students
  - Unique location allows for study of natural and urban environments
  - Students investigate public health, urban planning, environmental justice, and social issues of concern in area communities
  - School gardens, animals, and site are used for work experience and scientific investigation
  - Students prepare for college and active citizenship through an innovative College-Preparatory Curriculum
  - Courses focus on inquiry, collaborative learning, and active, authentic academic experiences
  - Small School Environment
  - Personalized academic support and high expectations
  - Guidance teachers meet with students weekly
  - Partnerships/Collaborations: The Peabody Museum at Yale, Yale's Urban Resource Institute, The Consultation Center, Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice, CT DEP, CitySeed, the University of New Haven, Public Allies/AmeriCorps, SCSU, the School for Ethical Education, U.S. EPA, Yale School of Nursing, and Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.
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### SPECIAL EDUCATION

Number of K-12 Students with Disabilities for Whom the District is Financially Responsible	N/A
Of All K-12 Students for Whom the District is Financially Responsible, the Percent with Disabilities	N/A

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Of All K-12 Students for Whom District is Financially Responsible, Number and Percentage with Disabilities				
Disability	Count	District Percent	DRG Percent	State Percent
Autism	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Learning Disability	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Intellectual Disability	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Emotional Disturbance	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Speech Impairment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other Health Impairment*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other Disabilities**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

\*Includes chronic health problems such as attention deficit disorders and epilepsy

\*\*Includes hearing, visual, and orthopedic impairments, deaf-blindness, multiple disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and developmental delay

Graduation and Dropout Rates of Students with Disabilities for Whom District is Financially Responsible	District	State
% Who Graduated in 2007-08 with a Standard Diploma	N/A	N/A
2007-08 Annual Dropout Rate for Students Aged 14 to 21	N/A	N/A

## STATE ASSESSMENTS

**Percent of Students with Disabilities Meeting State Goal.** The Goal level is more demanding than the Proficient level, but not as high as the Advanced level, reported in the No Child Left Behind Report Cards. These results are for students attending district schools who participated in the standard assessment with or without accommodations for their disabilities. Results for fewer than 20 students are not presented.

- **Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), Fourth Generation.** The CMT reading, writing and mathematics tests are administered to students in Grades 3 through 8, and the CMT science test to students in Grades 5 and 8.
- **Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), Third Generation.** The CAPT is administered to Grade 10 students.

State Assessment		Students with Disabilities		All Students	
		District	State	District	State
CMT	Reading	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Writing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Mathematics	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Science	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CAPT	Reading Across the Disciplines	N/A	N/A	11.8	47.4
	Writing Across the Disciplines	N/A	N/A	13.2	55.0
	Mathematics	N/A	N/A	11.3	47.8
	Science	N/A	N/A	7.4	42.8

For more detailed CMT or CAPT results, go to [www.ctreports.com](http://www.ctreports.com). To see the NCLB Report Card for this school, go to [www.sde.ct.gov](http://www.sde.ct.gov) and click on “No Child Left Behind.”

Participation in State Assessments of Students with Disabilities Attending District Schools		
CMT	% Without Accommodations	N/A
	% With Accommodations	N/A
CAPT	% Without Accommodations	0.0
	% With Accommodations	100.0
% Assessed Using Skills Checklist		0.0

Accommodations for a student’s disability may be made to allow him or her to participate in testing. Students whose disabilities prevent them from taking the test even with accommodations are assessed by means of a list of skills aligned to the same content and grade level standards as the CMT and CAPT.

Federal law requires that students with disabilities be educated with their non-disabled peers as much as is appropriate. Placement in separate educational facilities tends to reduce the chances of students with disabilities interacting with non-disabled peers, and of receiving the same education.

K-12 Students with Disabilities Placed in Educational Settings Other Than This District’s Schools		
Placement	Count	Percent
Public Schools in Other Districts	N/A	N/A
Private Schools or Other Settings	N/A	N/A

Number and Percentage of K-12 Students with Disabilities for Whom District is Financially Responsible by the Percentage of Time They Spent with Their Non-Disabled Peers				
Time Spent with Non-Disabled Peers	Count of Students	Percent of Students		
		District	DRG	State
79.1 to 100 Percent of Time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
40.1 to 79.0 Percent of Time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
0.0 to 40.0 Percent of Time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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**SCHOOL DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLANS AND ACTIVITIES**

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The following narrative was submitted by this district.

During its eleventh year, Common Ground continued to revise and enhance its program. A school-wide focus on teaching and learning consistent with the school's environmental mission and state standards alignment has been maintained. Teachers continued to develop expertise in best teaching practice through workshops on standards-based unit design delivered by a CALI consultant on-site, and through attendance at several state-sponsored CALI workshops. Consultants also worked with staff to create Professional Learning Communities.

Common Ground utilizes the Reader/Writer workshop model developed at Columbia University, including a second-year course in advanced reading strategies. The English and reading teachers met as a structured data team, reviewing student performance data from pre-assessments, setting common strategies and teacher practices, and reassessing once a month. Training from CALI and Columbia University Teachers College allowed subject-area teachers to emphasize academic reading strategies and expository writing. A subject-area data team met to coordinate these school-wide efforts. Core literacy and numeracy skills programs for students with special needs or skill deficiencies were added. The mathematics curriculum was revised to emphasize deeper conceptual focus and to build understanding through applying skills to solving challenging real-world problems. School leaders observed classes regularly during the 2008-09 year to increase the dialogue on teaching and learning.

Parents were involved in school improvement planning in two formats: a parent team met twice per trimester and informed a parent representative to the board of directors, and parent workshops yielded parent input on school improvement, parent needs, and communication. New career and college counseling activities were added to our weekly small-group guidance meetings. A Junior College and Career experience class was added. Senior seminar was revised to create an intensive social justice capstone project requiring research, service, and action.

School improvement efforts fostered a dramatic increase in state mastery scores from 2006-07 to 2007-08, which was sustained in 2008-09.

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