

STRATEGIC SCHOOL PROFILE 2007-08**Common Ground High School District**

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

Location: 358 Springside Avenue
New Haven,
Connecticut

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.

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 and click on Adult Education, then Reports.

District Reference Group (DRG): N/A

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Enrollment on October 1, 2007 153
5-Year Enrollment Change 37.8%

DISTRICT GRADE RANGE

Grade Range 9-12

INDICATORS OF EDUCATIONAL NEED

Need Indicator	Number in District	Percent		
		District	DRG	State
Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Meals	100	65.4	N/A	28.7
K-12 Students Who Are Not Fluent in English	0	0.0	N/A	5.4
Students Identified as Gifted and/or Talented	0	0.0	N/A	4.0
PK-12 Students Receiving Special Education Services in District	32	20.9	N/A	11.4
Kindergarten Students who Attended Preschool, Nursery School or Headstart	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Homeless	5	3.3	N/A	0.2
Juniors and Seniors Working 16 or More Hours Per Week	8	14.3	N/A	20.2

SCHOOL DISTRICT DIVERSITY

Student Race/Ethnicity		
Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent
American Indian	0	0.0
Asian American	1	0.7
Black	82	53.6
Hispanic	47	30.7
White	23	15.0
Total Minority	130	85.0

Percent of Minority Professional Staff: 7.1%

Non-English Home Language: 4.6% 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.

EFFORTS TO REDUCE RACIAL, ETHNIC, AND ECONOMIC ISOLATION

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 have ranged from 3 to 27 over ten years, with a dramatic jump to 47 in the past two years.

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 yearly Farm Festival brings many visitors from beyond the immediate neighborhood. The Common Ground Summer Camp for middle schoolers enrolled equal proportions of African-American, Hispanic and white students. These activities give student assistants from Common Ground experience with a greater variety of ethnic and economic groups. Our students have hosted a literary and art competition about global warming for middle schools and have been involved in the Peabody Museum's Evolutions program, CT Envirothon competition, service learning opportunities, a youth philanthropy board, and conferences on environmental careers. 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 a parent focus group made up of parents of students in our non-school-day environmental programs and expanded partnerships with Yale, SCSU, and UNH. The involvement of our students in an increasing number of city-wide conferences, activities and collaborations provides them with rich experiences with people of many backgrounds.

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.

To see the NCLB Report Card for this school, go to 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	15.4	45.5	6.9
Writing Across the Disciplines	28.0	57.9	6.2
Mathematics	7.7	50.1	1.5
Science	11.5	46.3	3.8

For more detailed CAPT results, go to www.ctreports.com.

To see the NCLB Report Card for this school, go to 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
	N/A	N/A	N/A

SAT [®] I: Reasoning Test Class of 2007		District	State	% of Districts in State with Equal or Lower Scores
% of Graduates Tested		57.1	77.6	
Average Score	Mathematics	396	504	3.8
	Critical Reading	436	502	7.7
	Writing	440	503	9.2

SAT[®] I. The lowest possible score on each SAT[®] 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 2007	93.3	92.6	30.0
Cumulative Four-Year Dropout Rate for Class of 2007	2.6	6.2	60.9
2006-07 Annual Dropout Rate for Grade 9 through 12	0.7	1.7	71.1

Activities of Graduates	District	State
% Pursuing Higher Education (Degree and Non-Degree Programs)	71.4	83.4
% Employed (Civilian Employment and in Armed Services)	28.6	12.3

RESOURCES AND EXPENDITURES

DISTRICT STAFF

Full-Time Equivalent Count of District Staff	
General Education	
Teachers and Instructors	11.00
Paraprofessional Instructional Assistants	2.60
Special Education	
Teachers and Instructors	1.00
Paraprofessional Instructional Assistants	0.00
Library/Media Specialists and 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	5.25

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	4.4	N/A	13.6
% with Master's Degree or Above	50.0	N/A	75.6

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	21.0	N/A	18.6

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	1,006

*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	2.9	N/A	2.7

*Excludes schools with no grades above kindergarten.

DISTRICT EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES, 2006-07

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	\$942	\$6,497	\$7,517	N/A	\$7,159
Instructional Supplies and Equipment	\$26	\$178	\$337	N/A	\$266
Improvement of Instruction and Educational Media Services	\$24	\$166	\$380	N/A	\$429
Student Support Services	\$82	\$565	\$674	N/A	\$761
Administration and Support Services	\$236	\$1,627	\$1,722	N/A	\$1,271
Plant Operation and Maintenance	\$108	\$743	\$1,521	N/A	\$1,322
Transportation	\$6	N/A	\$728	N/A	\$601
Costs for Students Tuitioned Out	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	\$122	\$843	\$310	N/A	\$145
Total	\$1,546	\$10,660	\$13,655	N/A	\$12,151
Additional Expenditures					
Land, Buildings, and Debt Service	\$93	\$644	\$2,722	N/A	\$1,882

Special Education Expenditures	
Total Expenditures	N/A
Percent of Total PK-12 Expenditures Used for Special Education	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	83.5	12.1	4.4
Excluding School Construction	0.0	77.5	12.3	10.2

EQUITABLE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES AMONG DISTRICT SCHOOLS

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 Studies Focus and Honors Program

- 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

Innovative College-Preparatory Curriculum

- Students prepare for college and active citizenship • Courses focus on inquiry, collaborative learning, and direct experience

Small School Environment

- Personalized academic support and high expectations • Guidance teachers meet with students weekly

- Teachers and staff know all the students and expect high performance

Partnerships: The Consultation Center, Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice, CT Dept. of Envr.

Protection, Environment Northeast, NH Health and City Plan Dept., Public Allies/Americorps, SCSU, Sch. for

Ethical Educ., U.S. Envr. Protection Agency, Yale School of Nursing, and Yale Sch. of Forestry and Envr. Studies.

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

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 2006-07 with a Standard Diploma	N/A	N/A
2006-07 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	15.4	45.5
	Writing Across the Disciplines	N/A	N/A	28.0	57.9
	Mathematics	N/A	N/A	7.7	50.1
	Science	N/A	N/A	11.5	46.3

For more detailed CMT or CAPT results, go to www.ctreports.com. To see the NCLB Report Card for this school, go to 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	25.0
	% With Accommodations	75.0
% Assessed Using Skills Checklist		N/A

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

SCHOOL DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLANS AND ACTIVITIES

The following narrative was submitted by this district.

During its tenth year, Common Ground initiated substantial revision and enhancement of its program. The first stage was reviewing and restructuring curriculum in line with the school's environmental mission, emerging environmental issues, and state standards during a full-faculty summer institute in July 2006. During the school year school leaders trained in 'Making Standards Work' and 'Effective Teaching Strategies'. Initial training of faculty in these areas was completed with deeper training scheduled for July 2007.

Common Ground continues to develop a reading workshop course based on the Columbia University's Reading and Writing Workshop model. A second-year course in advanced reading strategies was piloted last year. 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 on a six-week cycle. 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. A core skill program for students with special needs or skill deficiencies was added. The mathematics curriculum is under revision to emphasize deeper conceptual focus and to build understanding through applying skills to solving challenging real-world problems. School leaders began sitting in on classes every week during the 2007-08 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 "step-up" ceremony in June was a highlight of student pride and Common Ground culture. Each class made a presentation to the students who were entering that class the next year. Excellent and heartfelt advice was provided and students pledged to be excellent role models for younger students.
