



## New Haven Public Schools

### Race To Top 2013 Engage New Haven Project Summary

The goal of our proposed “Engage New Haven” Race to the Top District program is to transform our culture of teaching and learning and equipping all stakeholders with the capacity (systems, tools, and skills) to deepen instructional practices and enable purposeful, supportive and meaningful learning for each individual student, based on his/her interests and needs.

**Our program is designed to transform the learning experiences for our middle school (6-9) students by leveraging our unique structure to provide support for engaging interdisciplinary individualized education for this key population.**

**Our theory of action revolves around the idea that students in grades 6-9 are learners that contextualize education in relation to their personal development and life. Thus, if we use student interest and goals (through Student Success Plans) to define deep, culturally relevant, cross disciplinary and meaningful learning projects, and provide support through use of multimedia technology, blended learning for essential skills, community mentors, wraparound support services, and ties to extended time we will then ensure students transition to high school as engaged, authentic learners.**

#### 1. a) College and Career Ready knowledge and skills:

NHPS currently implements a rigorous curriculum aligned to the Connecticut state standards in all subject areas and college readiness benchmarks, and has a periodic district assessment system in place across all schools to measure student progress toward annual learning goals, highlight gaps in standards mastery, and make adjustments in curriculum and instruction. NHPS has adopted and implemented, the Common Core state standards is part of the governing coalition in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, and has already begun to transition to Common Core standards and aligned curriculum through a grade-staggered implementation across content areas. NHPS is also taking a lead in developing Connecticut’s transition to the Next Generation Science Standards. We also have a curriculum model that focuses on significant performance tasks, and have begun work on interdisciplinary units and courses such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). As part of our *School Change Initiative*, we have introduced 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies and portfolios, and established Student Success Plans for grades 6-12 to ensure focus on college and career planning and readiness. New Haven Public Schools also recently revised high school graduation standards to match the CSU system’s 2015 entering freshman standards. New Haven Public Schools has also developed a P20 Council and NHPS/University vertical team. NHPS is further strengthening the access to career pathways through the development of the Gateway Technical Institute and extended day programs for all secondary students. On May 17th, a symposium was held at Gateway Community College entitled *Graduating Our Students to Succeed: A Collaborative Problem Solving Process to Align K-12 with College and the Workforce*, and is developing further action committees designed to align curriculum and programs to give students the support they need for their future.

#### b) Changes needed to achieve these standards:

Students need personalized and meaningful learning. Learning grades 6-9 are where educational content standards become deeper and more rigorous. Students are expected to delve deeply into topics in math, including Algebra, read, critique and analyze authentic text, including non fiction, write well supported persuasive essays, and absorb challenging content skills and concepts in fields such as science, social studies and world language. Their traditional learning day is not one spent with one teacher, but experiencing discrete and isolated subjects. It is these students that need the opportunity to align their interdisciplinary learning with their interests and goals, in order to make it more coherent and meaningful. Our data, as well as research in urban early adolescent education, shows that many of our students start to be disconnected from school in these grades, and do not develop the academic an

personal skills and background needed to carry them through to the more challenging upper high school learning. These grades are where students, especially ELL learners and Black and Hispanic males, “turn off” school, so the changes needed have to address this need most of all.

c) Change Practices:

Essential learning will start with the student success plan for each student in sixth grade. Through counselors, advisors, students will be immersed in experiences around careers, colleges, pathways and essential skills that they will need for their future. Students will have experiences through community mentors, field trips, and start developing individualized goals, using their own profiles, needs and interests. These activities will inform purposeful student to adult interactions that will further shape their plans. This will continue and expand, with appropriate support in staffing, administration, technology and resources throughout grade 7 and 8, and into grade 9 transition. Beginning in sixth grade and extended into grade 9, all students, especially those in targeted sub groups, will be afforded the opportunity to engage in personalized learning environments (blended learning) using adaptive software to instruct and support them in important Common Core mathematics and literacy skills.

These student success plans will then guide rich, deep, and meaningful cross-disciplinary individualized learning investigations tied to student interests. Since each NHPS school has a core subject team for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade (typically 5 subject teachers for 50 7<sup>th</sup> graders, 50 8<sup>th</sup> graders), these grades will devote a significant amount of in-school time to advising and guiding students on these investigations, culminating with a large capstone project at the end of grade 8. Each school will develop a specific model which will include flexible schedules and advisory components. Teachers will be given time to collaborate and professional development in interdisciplinary project work. Community mentors will serve as guides and resources for students and staff, especially in non-academic areas of personal and social development. Technology resources will be provided for students to not only support their mathematics and literacy development, but also to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, produce multimedia projects, and use blended learning to investigate topics and achieve their goals. Student choice in their inquiry based learning and their learning presentations will allow students to see the interconnectedness, making it more relevant and meaningful. Parents and families will be involved in setting student goals, and being integral supporters of student investigations. Wraparound support services, such as our BOOST program, will connect city and district agencies and staff to support individualized emotional, physical, and family needs. Extended learning time opportunities, such as afterschool, Saturday, and summer programs, will be linked to individualized Student Success Plans, goals and investigations, both with staff and data/technology support. Educators will undergo intensive embedded professional development around whole child instruction, team and interdisciplinary teaching, and connecting students’ current interests with development of key skills. Teacher, counselor, administrator goals will also connect, through our robust data systems and groundbreaking evaluation systems, to students success on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, Common Core skills, and development along their individualized investigations.

These experiences will then be tied to a transition program for students entering grade 9 in a variety of New Haven high schools. Summer programs and extension into their freshman academy programs will be strengthened and supported across the district. In this way, the results of their investigations, and their achievement of skills can be used to set them on the path for high school, college and career success.

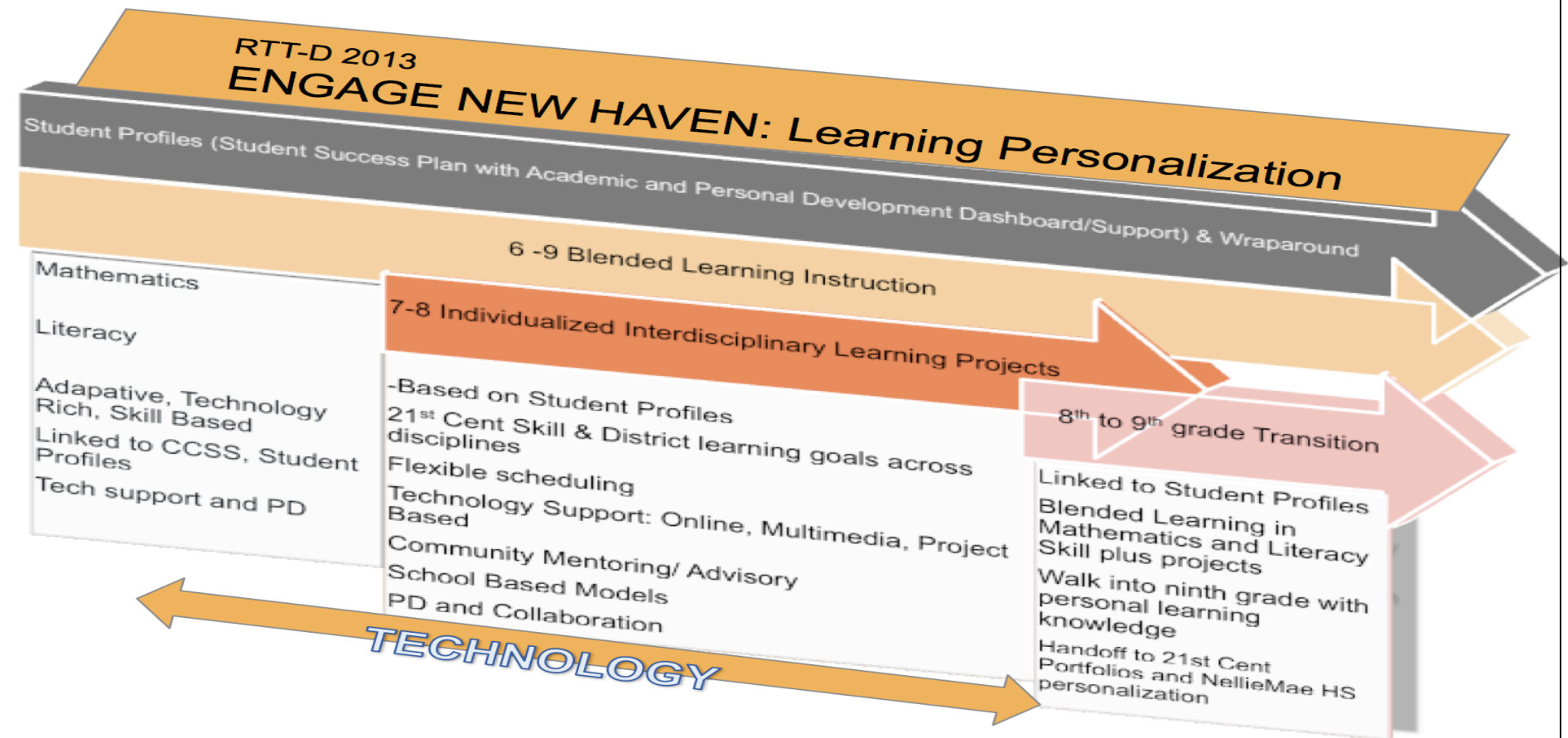
**2. Award request and participation**

-New Haven Public Schools “Engage New Haven” request is level 2 (5001-10,000) 6100 students.

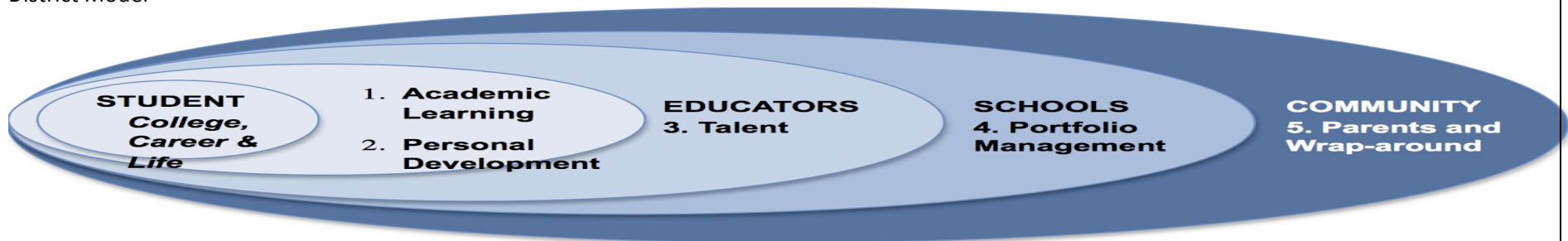
-Participation: Grade 6: 1422, Grade 7: 1441, Grade 8: 1442, Grade 9: 1862 = 6, 187 students

-Budget (\$16.88 MM) level 2 range (\$10 million to \$20 million). Budget request supporta all the above activities and will include: Professional Development, Technology (both equipment and services), Supplies and Materials, Staffing and Support, Wraparound services (competitive priority)

Race to the Top 2013 “Engage New Haven” Project Model:



District Model





**TO: Mayor, City of New Haven  
Commissioner, Connecticut State Department of Education  
Wednesday, September 18, 2013**

**Attached please find the latest draft of our New Haven Public Schools Race to the Top District 2013 “Engage New Haven” narrative, as well as the attached project plan outline and budget spreadsheet. We are pleased to extend the work of our detailed work from the fall of 2012 in using feedback and our changing landscape in refocusing and crafting our RTT-D 2013 proposal.**

**The proposal this year was developed by a core project team, along with feedback from various partners.**

**The key focus is personalized learning for students in grades 6-9, focusing on technology rich interdisciplinary projects and using student profiles to guide learning, with support from wraparound services.**

**We will be impacting ~6100 students over four years for an approximate grant request of \$16.88 Million.**

**We invite to you submit comments and suggestions, in order to help us further refine this plan over the next ten days.**

**We will be submitting the complete grant proposal to the United States Department of Education on the afternoon of Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, and would be please to take your feedback into account.**

**The draft narrative as submitted to you for feedback is by necessity still to be revised in key sections:**

**We expect updated data for district goals and records of progress to be included in Section A4 and B, as we may receive further key indicators from the Connecticut State Department of Education (SPI) and may gather further information about student learning assessments (SBAC/Common Core or CMT/CAPT) to be used in the 2014 and 2015 testing cycles that would serve as a basis for performance goals. The New Haven Board of Education has also scheduled meetings that may be revising district and Board of Education goals in that time frame as well. This will also require revising grant performance measures in section E(3) as well.**

**Our Board of Education will be working with our new superintendent of schools in several ways which may impact areas in section E including district organizational structure and other areas of continuous improvement.**

**While the key initiatives found in our project plan will be the same (Personal Learning, Student Profiles, Technology Innovation, Wraparound Services, Professional Development), different sub sections may change in the next ten days, depending on updated information expected from other grants, such as our Nellie Mae and Gates iPD grant. This will of course, impact our budget, however, the attached spreadsheet shows the required detail. Note that we have embedded most technology and professional development in each initiative section rather than separating it out.**

**We have included a tentative outline of appendices documents.**

Feedback will also be given in the form of technical assistance based on the winning summary submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education (also attached). America Achieves, a group associated with the submission of several RTT-D plans, will be working with the district to further refine the overall plan as well in group feedback sessions.

Please submit written comments/feedback to our Superintendent Mr. Garth Harries ([garth.harries@new-haven.k12.ct.us](mailto:garth.harries@new-haven.k12.ct.us)) and to our RTT Project Team (c/o Richard Therrien, [richard.therrien@new-haven.k12.ct.us](mailto:richard.therrien@new-haven.k12.ct.us)). Please note that written feedback will be included as part of the official grant application to the federal government.

Thank you for your support.

**Attachments:**

The overview summary submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education on August 30, 2013.

The NHPS-RTT\_DraftForComment.docx, which is the bulk of the narrative.

A spreadsheet identifying major initiatives NHPS\_RTTInitiaves.xls (which will be an appendix)