

2019 Community Report

September 1, 2018 – August 31, 2019

Dear Community Partners,

In Stamford, we are *stronger together*.



I would like to take this opportunity to share with you noteworthy highlights and achievements accomplished by the Stamford Cradle to Career (SC2C) initiative during the 2018–2019 academic year, and goals we have in place for the future, some of which will undoubtedly be influenced by the challenges currently affecting our city, state and country.

SC2C's mission is to collectively align community resources to ensure equity and excellence in education, for every child, cradle to career. We know that successful children lead to vibrant and thriving communities. Established in 2016, the SC2C partnership has made great progress in this effort and we are proud to share what took place across the network in 2019 employing the Plan, Do, Study, Act initiative. We also continued relying on data analysis as well as feedback from the community when looking toward future programming.

The COVID-19 crisis has tested us as a community, and I am proud to report that the groundwork we laid over four years of establishing the SC2C network has empowered us to approach this challenging situation in a coordinated way by leveraging trusted community relationships. Working with the City of Stamford and Stamford Public Schools, our partners have been able to quickly coordinate efforts such as volunteer-powered food delivery systems for families and seniors, opening a childcare center for hospital employees, and providing books to children. These

crucial services are core components of the city's response to this crisis and are in place to support families and children in need. These established partnerships and lines of communication have also positioned SC2C as a guiding voice in the critical conversations around ending institutional and systemic racism in our city and beyond.

We will continue to support and advocate for Stamford's children and their families during this extraordinary time as we move forward and navigate effects of the educational and economic challenges on inequity across our city. We pledge to use our resources wisely, and never lose sight of our mission to ensure that our youth succeed.

Please read on for further details and thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Bridget F. Fox

Bridget Fox

President, Stamford Cradle to Career
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United Way of Western Connecticut serves as the anchor and backbone entity providing management and fiscal support for the partnership.



BACKBONE SUPPORT PROVIDED BY



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“Our collective impact model works because the Stamford community committed as cooperative partners, setting high standards and creating a shared effort to proceed toward our common goals. ”

Dr. Tamu Lucero
Superintendent of Stamford Public Schools



Stamford Cradle to Career is:



A citywide initiative that supports educational success for all Stamford children and families regardless of income, race or circumstance.



A member of the StriveTogether national non-profit network of nearly 70 communities that have adopted the collective impact model.



We bring together partner organizations to work creatively to strengthen and scale existing programs, and pilot new ones that address identified needs.



With a focus on equity, we collect and analyze data at the community and student level, targeting what is working and identifying what needs improvement.



Vision: All youth succeed in education, career and life.

Mission: To collectively align community resources to ensure equity and excellence in education, for every child, from cradle to career.



SC2C has adopted the *collective impact approach* to support the more than **37,000** youth that live and learn in Stamford (**29%** of the city's population)

The StriveTogether Network reaches **13.7 million** youth (nearly **nine million** children of color) across the U.S.

Note: All percentages in this report have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

To help Stamford thrive, our primary objectives are to have all children:



Ready to Learn in Kindergarten



Reading Proficiently by Third Grade



Graduating Prepared for the Future

Birth to Age 5

Elementary School

Middle School

High School

College / Career Readiness

Partner Organizations

Abilis
 All Our Kin
 Beyond Limits Academic Program
 Boys & Girls Club of Stamford
 Building One Community
 Charter Oak Communities
 Child Development Infoline
 Child Health and Development Institute
 of Connecticut
 Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut
 Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County
 City of Stamford, Office of the Mayor
 Community Health Center, Inc.
 Dalio Foundation
 Department of Children and Families
 Domus Kids
 Fairfield County's Community Foundation
 Family Centers, Inc.
 The Ferguson Library
 Filling In the Blanks
 Future 5
 Grassroots Tennis
 Harvard Business School Club of Connecticut
 Community Partners
 Horizons at New Canaan Country School
 Inspirica
 Intempo
 Interfaith Council
 Kids In Crisis
 Medical Home Initiative,
 Southwest Connecticut
 Mill River Park Collaborative
 NAACP

Norwalk Community College
 Optimus Healthcare
 The Palace
 Parent Teacher Council, Stamford Public Schools
 Partnership for Early Education Research (PEER)
 Person-to-Person
 ROSCCO
 Saint Joseph Parenting Center
 Stamford Board of Education
 Stamford Board of Representatives
 Stamford Department of Social Services
 Stamford Family YMCA
 Stamford Food Collaborative
 Stamford Health
 Stamford Health Department
 Stamford Parent Leader Training Institute (PLTI)
 Stamford Police Department
 Stamford Public Education Foundation
 Stamford Public Schools
 Stamford School Readiness Council
 Stamford Youth Bureau
 United Methodist Church
 United Way of Western Connecticut
 University of Connecticut Stamford
 Women's Mentoring Network

We're proud to work alongside other
 Connecticut communities in the
 StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network:
 Norwalk ACTS, Bridgeport Prospers and
 Waterbury Bridge to Success



“There is no better investment our society can
 make than investing in our young children.
 Making a difference in their lives and those of their families is what
 drives our efforts at CLC and why we support Stamford Cradle to Career.”

Marc Jaffe
 CEO, Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County

Our Support Network

Driven by a common agenda and focused on key indicators that influence student outcomes, our community is working together to identify and expand what is working while adopting best practices from across the country to ensure that our children are healthy and successful.

“By aligning the public schools, local government and the non-profit sector, Stamford Cradle to Career has fostered an organic culture of collaboration focused on ensuring that Stamford’s children and families gain the tools they need for long-term success. Stamford Cradle to Career is primed to have a major impact on bridging the opportunity gap.”

*Robert M. Arnold
President and CEO, Family Centers*

Executive Team

Co-Chairs:

Mike Duggan, *Domus Kids*
Matt Quinones, *Stamford Public Education Foundation*

Bob Arnold, *Family Centers*
Barbara Carr, *Stamford Health*
Olympia Della Flora, *Stamford Public Schools*
Linda Franciscovich, *Grossman Family Foundation*
Jackie Heftman, *Board of Education*
Catalina Horak, *Building One Community*
Marc Jaffe, *CLC of Fairfield County*
Alice Knapp, *The Ferguson Library*
Nadene McKenzie Reid, *Community Parent*
Joseph Montalbano, *HLW International LLP*
Isabel Almeida, *United Way of Western CT*
Michael Pollard, *Office of the Mayor*
Vincent Tufo, *Charter Oak Communities*
Dudley Williams, *Mill River Park Collaborative*
Candy Yeager, *Community Member*

Advisory Council

Terrence Cheng, *UConn Stamford*
Andy George, *Board of Education*
Stage Senator Carlo Leone, *State Delegation*
Mark Lingle, *Interfaith Council of Southwestern CT*
Dr. Tamu Lucero, *Stamford Public Schools*
Mayor David Martin, *City of Stamford*
Kathleen Silard, *Stamford Health*



We Are Stronger Together

Stamford is a city rich with diverse resources and citizens. The plurality of languages, cultures and neighborhoods provides opportunities to celebrate our differences as well as opportunities to reflect on how disparities impact our community.

Addressing the unique challenges and needs associated with our diverse community takes a collaborative effort. It takes a village to raise a child, and Stamford Cradle to Career (SC2C) has rallied our community in support of this common agenda. More than 60 civic and non-profit organizations have come together to ensure that all Stamford youth are successful in reaching major milestones.

A Broad Perspective

SC2C recognizes that socio-economic and family dynamics contribute to our children and families accessing Stamford schools and community programs with varied levels of experiences, resources and needs. In support of our age-specific Community Action Networks (CANs), the SC2C Community Task Force focuses on the bigger picture, building awareness and support for the four areas that have the greatest impact on education:

- **Food Security:** Improving access to reliable food sources on a regular basis
- **Chronic Absenteeism:** Addressing the issues that cause a child to miss 10 percent or more school days
- **Race, Equity and Inclusion:** Fostering systemic change through shared definitions, best practices and collaborative activism
- **Family and Community Engagement:** Engaging families to co-develop solutions to community issues

In order to achieve equity in our community, the Task Force is working to identify causes and correct systems that perpetuate inequalities. We know that in order to achieve equitable results for all children and families, we must co-develop solutions with them. We are committed to doing so in the coming year.



2018–2019 Academic Year At a Glance



All children are ready to learn in kindergarten

- Worked with pre-school teachers toward the goal of completing a **Pre-Kindergarten Transition Summary** (PKTS) form for the majority of students before they start kindergarten, completing over 1,000 forms.
- Obtained funding to pilot the **Sparkler app, a developmental screening tool** intended to help caregivers track infant and toddler social and emotional development.



All children are reading proficiently by third grade

- Secured funding to launch the **Stamford Summer Literacy Initiative** (SSLI) in June 2020, which will embed public school teachers into community camp programs as literacy coaches. They will provide professional development to staff and one-on-one reading intervention support to campers, being flexible across virtual formats and on-site camps where possible. The SSLI will also partner with the Ferguson Library to launch a city-wide literacy-focused public awareness campaign targeted to low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.
- Partnered with Stamford Public Schools (SPS) to provide **professional development opportunities** around adopting a common language and a consistent approach to literacy focused on community-based after-school and summer programs.



All children are graduating prepared for the future

- Piloted the **Bridge to College program** to reduce the number of high school graduates who do not start college in the fall as planned, known as “summer melt,” by providing resources, support and guidance to almost 50 prospective first-generation college students who had planned to attend Norwalk Community College.
- Focused on developing a common language around **essential skills** that students need to have upon completing high school and creating and distributing materials that summarize these skills to students, parents, educators and community programs.



Focus on the bigger picture is impacting education

- Educated the SC2C network on **institutional racism** and asked those organizations to examine how the racial makeup of their boards of directors and staffs influences programming decisions.
- Worked to **combat food insecurity** by streamlining a system of getting weekend food backpacks to all schools, serving more than 1,000 students every week, after surveying school social workers to assess needs outside of school-provided lunches.
- Took the lead on driving the **School Climate and Restorative Practices program**, a framework that encourages a nurturing school culture of supportive relationships over punitive consequences.
- Adopted Connecticut’s areas of focus around **family engagement** and encouraged all partners to establish a common language and process around its guiding principles.

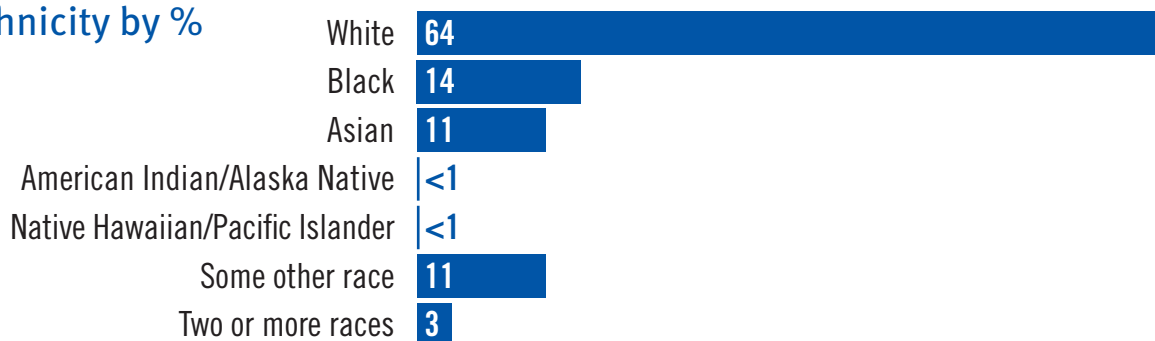


We Are Stamford

Stamford is the second largest city in Connecticut and the fastest growing city in the state. By 2025, the population is projected to surpass 136,000 (Source: City of Stamford). According to WalletHub's 2020 rankings, Stamford is among the most diverse cities in the U.S. It ranks 23rd culturally and 31st linguistically.

Total Population: 129,026

Race / Ethnicity by %



*Hispanic/Latino of any race 26

Age by %



Source: 2018 American Community Survey

*Ethnicity counted separately from races shown above

A Closer Look at Poverty

Population Below Poverty Level: **11,884 (9% of the city's population)**

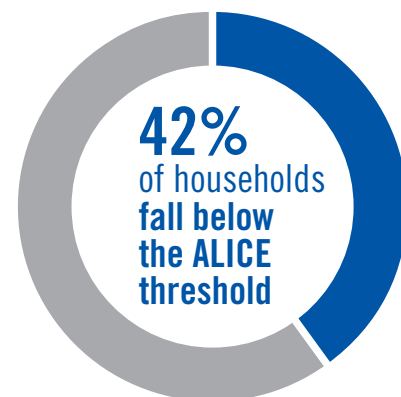
Population Under Age 18 Below Poverty Level: **2,843 (11% of the city's population under age 18)**

Unemployment Rate for Ages 20-24 Years Old: **10%**

Source: 2018 American Community Survey Five Year Estimates

In 2018, Connecticut United Ways published an update to its original 2014 **ALICE** (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) report, which highlights the 30 percent of Connecticut households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) but less than the basic cost of living for the state (the **ALICE Threshold**). Each year in Stamford, over 50,000 households fall below this threshold and cannot afford basic needs such as housing, child care, food, transportation, health care and technology. The economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis will inevitably have a more severe impact on this population.

Source: 2018 United Way ALICE Report



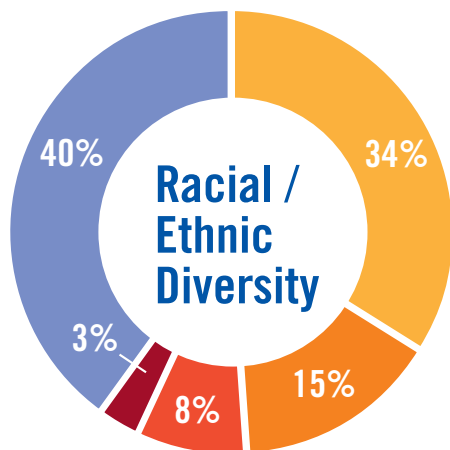
Stamford Public Schools By the Numbers

	Overall Enrollment	Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) Qualifiers**	English Language Learners
*2015–2016 School Year	15,946	8,328	2,007
2018–2019 School Year	16,053	9,211	2,050

Source: CT Department of Education

*Baseline data

**Enrolling qualified students in FRL was a priority during the 2019 school year



2018–2019 Total Enrollment: **16,053**

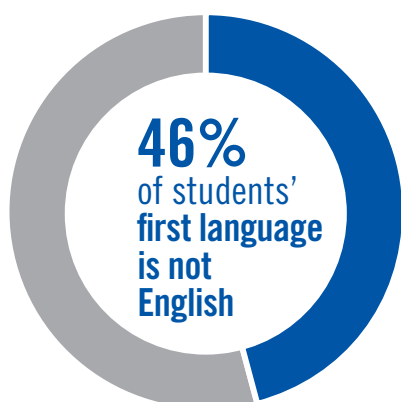
- Hispanic/Latino of any race
- White
- Black
- Asian
- Two or more races

Guiding Principles of Stamford Public Schools

Mission: to provide an education that cultivates productive habits of mind, body and heart in every student.

Vision: to be a learning organization that continuously improves its effective, innovative and transformational teaching and learning. They will challenge, inspire and prepare all students to be productive contributing members of society.

71 different languages are spoken at Stamford Public Schools, a **42% increase** from **50** languages spoken in 2000



10 Most Common Languages Spoken:

- | | |
|----------------|------------|
| English | Ukrainian |
| Spanish | Russian |
| Creole-Haitian | Portuguese |
| Bengali | Hindi |
| Polish | Arabic |

Source: CT Department of Education

We Align Resources

Stamford Cradle to Career (SC2C) equips our community partners with the knowledge and resources needed to influence future outcomes. With a focus on evidence-based decision-making, our work is driven by data but guided by personal experience.

We work closely with families, teachers and community caregivers—those closest to our youth—to close the gap between statistics and outcomes.

How It Works

By establishing communications channels and facilitating the sharing of information and resources across organizations, we can produce the greatest impact.

SC2C is working collaboratively with Stamford Public Schools, nonprofits, local colleges and universities, the City of Stamford, civic organizations, business owners, community members, parents and youth to effectively identify existing programs that have proven positive outcomes while simultaneously piloting new programs to address the need at hand.



“Stamford is an amazing city for countless reasons but, arguably, the main reason for Stamford’s success is its **incredible collaborative spirit.**

The Cradle to Career initiative has brought together a vast network of organizations to ensure we have the greatest impact on our children.”

*Dr. Tamu Lucero
Superintendent, Stamford Public Schools*

Throughout the
2018–2019
academic year,
SC2C facilitated:

66 unique strategic planning
and implementation meetings

136 members attending at
least one meeting

985 hours of meetings

Working Together to Achieve Outcomes

We follow a Plan / Do / Study / Act approach. Data is tracked closely so that the impact of programs is continuously measured and analyzed. The programs with the strongest results receive community and financial support, and are scaled for long-term sustainability.

A Strategy of Continuous Improvement

PLAN: What are we going to do?

- Establish partners and clarify purpose
- Define the problem and narrow scope to maximize impact
- Develop long / short-term goals, identify valid / reliable data and set measurable targets
- Identify and prioritize current and new projects based on potential impact; engage the community in decision making

DO: Let's do what we planned.

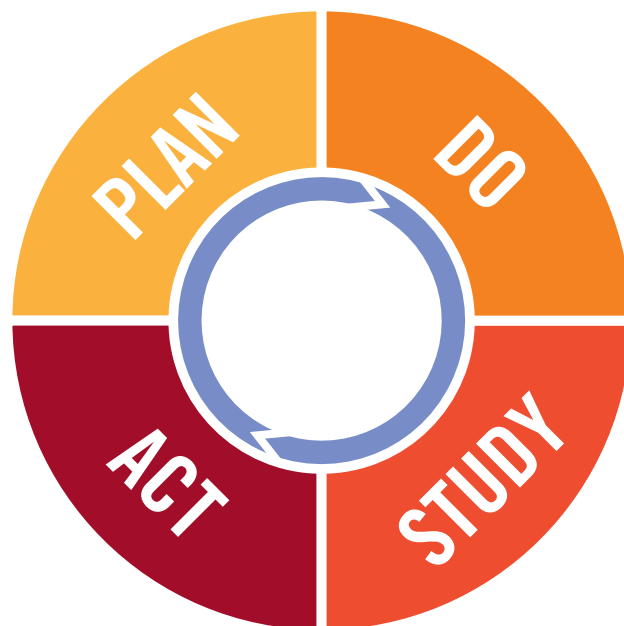
- Implement identified projects within each CAN's plan
- Hold each other accountable
- Follow the action plan

STUDY: Did it work?

- Collect, review and analyze the data / results
- Identify outcomes; did the work impact the expected change?
- Identify necessary changes / improvements to the process

ACT: Do we need to make changes?

- Use what was learned to plan improvements, beginning the cycle again
- If there was an impact, determine how the work can be sustained and expanded to have a greater impact



Looking Ahead

In 2019, each Stamford Cradle to Career (SC2C) Community Action Network (CAN) refined and matured plans to move the needle on specific population outcome goals including:

- Kindergarten Readiness
- Third Grade Reading Proficiency
- College and Career Readiness

The unprecedented circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic will bring new challenges and opportunities to addressing these and related outcomes. Including parents and youth in the planning and decision-making process is more critical than ever. In 2020, CANs will continue to move their work forward with a focus on engaging families and youth in the development of solutions.

The Early Years Matter

0-5 Early Childhood Community Action Network

In 2019, Stamford Cradle to Career (SC2C) combined two Community Action Networks (CANs): Infant Health and Development and Kindergarten Readiness. The newly merged CAN is now known as the **0-5 Early Childhood Network**. Integrating our efforts to improve infant health with our kindergarten transition work enabled SC2C to lay the groundwork for a system that starts at birth and ensures children and families, regardless of background, circumstance, or race, have accessible information and resources to support the healthy development of their babies and young children.

Adopting standardized early learning and health measures across city providers informs our ability to provide critical support and resources at younger ages.

Leadership

Kendra Brown

Director of Early Childhood Development and Intervention,
Stamford Public Schools
Former co-chair, Infant Health and Development

Erica Phillips

All Our Kin
Former co-chair, Infant Health and Development

Penny Lehman

Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County,
Former co-chair, Kindergarten Readiness

*Thank you to the former co-chairs of the
Infant Health and Development CAN:*

*Emily Goldschmid, Children's Learning Centers
Carole Elias, Family Centers*

Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional development is a crucial part of early childhood. Early childhood providers, and the Stamford Public Schools, have begun to adopt the **RULER approach** to social emotional learning. This approach, founded by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, develops skills that help children understand and regulate their emotions. These skills are essential in helping partners make sound decisions around teaching, learning and health outcomes for children.

The RULER approach was first used at Children's Learning Centers and has expanded to current use at all eight locations. It was piloted at Stillmeadow Elementary School in 2018 and All Our Kin began to integrate RULER into their training for family childcare providers in 2019. Through the expanded adoption of RULER, SC2C works to ensure that our children have the emotional foundation needed to succeed in school and in life.



Elements of the RULER Approach



- Recognizing emotions in oneself and others
- Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions
- Labeling emotions with a nuanced vocabulary
- Expressing emotions in accordance with cultural norms and social context
- Regulating emotions with helpful strategies

What is Kindergarten Readiness?

Statistics show that students who are kindergarten-ready are three times more likely to be reading at grade level four years later. Defining kindergarten readiness involves looking at a child's health, early learning experiences and enriching activities across their first few years of life.

Because families play a vital role in their child's learning and development, SC2C partners created a guide to help parents understand the district's expectations for children when they enter kindergarten.

Stamford Public Schools welcome all children, regardless of their status on the developmental continuum, and consider them ready for kindergarten when:

- **Their minds are flexible, inquisitive, focused and ready to learn.**
- **They have the strength to regulate a range of motor development and self-help skills.**
- **They can be mindful of their emotions and how those emotions affect others.**

Lessons Learned: Tools to Track Growth

The **Ages and Stages Questionnaire® (ASQ)** is a screening tool that tracks developmental milestones of children age 2 months to 5 years. A parent friendly tool, ASQ allows providers and parents to share a common language around understanding a child's development and potential need for support. In partnership with Child Development Infoline, SC2C is creating a database of results to ensure appropriate support services are available and accessible to meet identified needs.

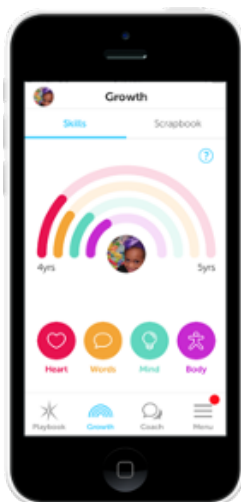
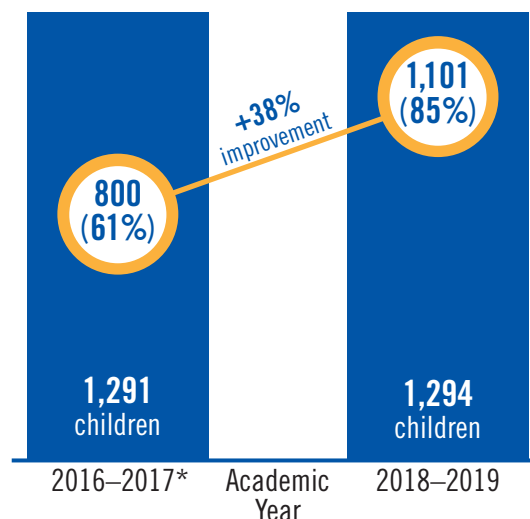
The **Pre-Kindergarten Transition Summary (PKTS)** is a summary form completed by pre-school teachers before a student graduates to kindergarten. Based on the State of CT early education standards, PKTS includes holistic student information about attendance, social and emotional development, cognitive development, literacy, math and motor skills development along with qualitative data contextualizing each child's outcomes. Detailed aggregated and disaggregated reports are shared with kindergarten staff to inform balanced class placement and instructional focus.

- Students Registered for Kindergarten
- PKTS Forms Completed

**Year PKTS assessments were introduced*

Source: SC2C and partner data aggregated by 0–5 CAN

Incoming Kindergarten Students



Looking Ahead: Sparkler

SC2C strives to help improve child developmental screening, communication and promotion with families by using technology to reduce barriers. In 2019, Stamford was one of six communities across the state to receive a grant to pilot the Sparkler app. Sparkler offers a mobile platform for parents to complete the ASQ and access a library of play activities that support positive development. Sparkler also includes virtual parental coaching. Sparkler brings parents and early care providers together to identify and address potential developmental concerns early.

SC2C is currently piloting the offering with five partner organizations whose work focuses on families and children ages 0–5. The pilot runs through May 2020.

We Engage Families

Healthy Relationships Lead to Healthy Outcomes

Stamford Cradle to Career (SC2C) recognizes that engaging with and listening to families, students and teachers goes beyond a person or place; it requires a process and strategy. To effectively respond to a student's needs, we must understand where that student is coming from, establishing a familiarity with his/her family, circumstance and aspirations. Once we have that understanding, we can make learning more relevant by making connections to the home.

Guided by the Stamford Public Schools, SC2C adopted and is encouraging all partners and the larger community to establish a common lexicon and processes based on the guiding principles of Family Engagement.

Family Engagement is a full, equal, and equitable partnership among families, educators and community partners to promote children's learning and development from birth through college and career. Areas of focus include:

- **Build collaborative, trusting relationships focused on learning**
- **Listen to what families say about their children's interests and challenges**
- **Model high-quality learning practices**
- **Share information frequently with families about how their children are doing**
- **Talk with students about how they want teachers and families to support their learning**
- **Co-develop cultural competence among staff and families**
- **Support parents to become effective leaders and advocates for children**



“Beyond reaching a student in the classroom, we want to expand our reach into the community and collaborate with the organizations and businesses that operate in and support those communities.

We strive to establish a positive and meaningful relationship.”

Dena Booker

Family Resource Facilitator, Stamford Public Schools

Supporting our Youngest Learners

The **School Readiness Preschool Program** is collaboration between Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County, Stamford Public Schools and the City of Stamford. The program was established to provide 3 and 4-year-olds at all economic levels with full-day, school day, or part-day early care and education programs. The program provides a range of comprehensive services for families, including:

- **Health services (including screenings and available nurses)**
- **Special needs services**
- **Complete nutrition education program and food support**
- **Parent involvement activities and learning sessions**
- **Comprehensive family service referrals**

Building Relationships Early

Throughout the Spring of 2019, SC2C collaborated with the Stamford Public Schools to host 13 **Play and Learn Nights** for incoming kindergarten families, an opportunity for kindergarten students and their caregivers to connect with each other and their districted school's kindergarten teachers, and ask questions of the Stamford Public Schools staff that was present. Math and literacy games were facilitated and each family received a new book from the Read to Grow Collaborative, thanks to the efforts of Stamford's School Readiness Council. Information on how to register for school was distributed and email addresses were collected. Administrators used these emails to connect with families and invite them to future community events. 286 families attended in 2019, up from 227 the previous year.

Empowering Parents

POWER at Building One Community uses the community organizing model to build power at the grassroots level among low-income immigrant parents. The 250+ member group forms and leads a broader coalition that confronts educational inequities in the public school system. SC2C recognizes how important it is for these voices to be heard and periodically invites parent leaders to participate in collaborative meetings.



The need to support immigrant parents and their children in school is well documented. The Connecticut Council for Education Reform reports that Connecticut has the widest opportunity gap in the nation and Stamford has the second-largest gap in the state between low-income children and their wealthier peers. Within Stamford Public Schools:

Latinx students are Stamford's largest racial/ethnic student group, representing approximately **40%** of all students. In two of the 13 elementary schools, this number exceeds **50%**.

Two-thirds of Latinx students are performing **below grade level in reading and math**.

Why is Reading So Important?

Early Grade Reading Community Action Network

Research shows that third grade reading proficiency is a critical milestone and a key indicator of high school graduation and future success post high school, as it's when the shift occurs from learning to read to reading to learn. The **Early Grade Reading Network** has focused its efforts on building the relationships and alignment between our schools' literacy staff, curriculum and methods and our community providers who support our children's learning and development during out of school time.

Leadership

Amy Beldotti

Associate Superintendent,
Stamford Public Schools

Alice Knapp

President,
Ferguson Library

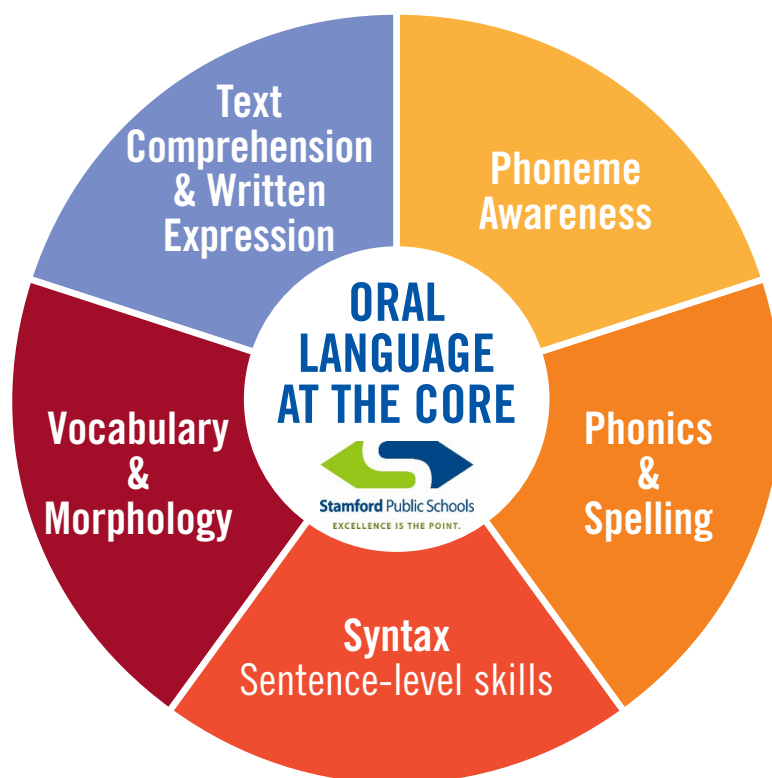
“ We know that children who learn to read in the early grades have a **significant advantage in developing more advanced skills**, an advantage that persists through their school years and beyond. We are so pleased to work with SC2C in this critical effort to support our youngest readers. ”

Alice Knapp
President, Ferguson Library

Comprehensive Literacy Instruction

Stamford Cradle to Career (SC2C) and Stamford Public Schools (SPS) have collaborated to provide community programs, organizations and individual volunteers with professional development opportunities to adopt a common language and a consistent approach to literacy in support of our youngest readers, with a focus on sustaining and improving literacy skills in community-based after-school programs and summer programs.

Our goal is to ensure that community partners who serve elementary students have a strong understanding of how students learn to read and have access to effective strategies and tools to support their literacy efforts.



Expanding Literacy Support Beyond the Classroom

In 2016, Stamford Cradle to Career (SC2C) brought together representatives from Stamford Public Schools (SPS) and organizations that provide after-school and summer programming for the youth of Stamford. The opportunity to learn from one another and share an alternate perspective of our community resulted in a partnership to support literacy.

During the 2018–19 school-year, the Boys and Girls Club of Stamford (BGCS) worked with SPS to provide additional support and services to a target population of first- and second-graders who were identified as reading below grade level. Ten BGCS staff members attended professional development training facilitated by SPS and a data sharing agreement was established in support of 65 identified students (roughly 25 percent of the BGCS after-school population). Identified students were provided with an additional 2 hours of individualized support per week. In addition, an SPS teacher provided daily support for both BGCS staff and students, developing targeted curriculum, directing reading levels and assisting staff as student progress evolved. The program continued during the 2019 summer camp season, serving 30 of the original 65 students, with SPS staff members providing one-on-one support and interventions.

Students who participate in the BGCS literacy support program are engaged in personalized learning that extends beyond the classroom. The literacy activities at BGCS fostered a love of learning among its participants and illustrated the value of aligning literacy strategies across community partners.

“SC2C has created a huge opportunity for after-school providers and our district’s teachers and principals to get to know one another and collaborate in support of our children. The increased communications has helped us to improve our programming and more effectively support our children and families.”

Maribel Sandalo

Director, Boys & Girls Club of Stamford Yerwood Center

Looking Ahead: Summer Literacy Initiative

Research shows that “summer slide,” the academic loss that children experience over the extended break from school, can cause low income students to fall back two-and-a-half to three years behind grade level by the time they reach fifth grade.

Thanks to a grant from the Nell and Herbert Singer Foundation, SC2C partnered with the Ferguson Library to hire four public school teachers to integrate literacy into four Stamford summer camp programs. An additional facet of the initiative will be a citywide public awareness campaign promoting the importance of reading and the library’s summer reading club.



We Measure What Matters

Every student will follow a unique path from cradle to career. Understanding and supporting that by collecting and analyzing data and using findings to build and boost robust programs to support those students is critical—and it's much more than test scores. Stamford Cradle to Career (SC2C) believes that when families, educators and partners have the right information to guide a program, students will succeed.

Chronic Absenteeism and School Climate

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or more of the school year regardless of the reason. Research shows that it contributes to lower academic achievement and is a powerful predictor of which students may eventually drop out of school.

The Chronic Absentee Program, led by the City's Youth Services Bureau, is a broad initiative with the goal of eliminating systemic and individual barriers to school attendance through education, prevention and treatment of chronic absenteeism. Reducing chronic absenteeism is a key component in our efforts to close the equity gap in education.

The work began with extensive surveys and in-depth interviews to identify needs, best practices and areas for improvement around attendance. This led to the creation of a District Attendance Team which is currently focused on four key areas:

- **Continually reviewing and analyzing data to inform action and needed changes**
- **Aligning district policies and procedures regarding attendance including data collection protocols and actionable data reports**
- **Direct support to schools, staff, students and families**
- **Piloting and implementing preventive measures including early warning systems, professional development for staff, a community-wide education campaign and adopting the concepts of School Climate and Restorative Practices**

School Climate and Restorative Practices (SCR) is a framework of concepts that encourages a nurturing culture by emphasizing supportive relationships over punitive consequences.

In 2019, Stamford Public Schools (SPS) and its partners set in motion the process to becoming a restorative community, piloting a training program for administrators, teachers and staff at Rippowam and Dolan Middle Schools. Prior to being introduced to SPS, SCR was first embraced by the Alternate Routes To Success Program (ARTS), now known as SPS Anchor at Harbor Landing, followed by Domus, Family Centers and Building One Community.

SC2C is taking the lead on driving SCR, working with SPS administrators and staff, students and parents, community organizations and civic leaders to build a community framework. Through training by recognized experts, we are creating shared values and practices in support of our children and youth. We believe the focus on building a restorative community will, along with other factors identified by the Community Task Force, such as transportation barriers, mitigate chronic absenteeism.



Combatting Disengagement

Thanks to a relationship with the Dalio Foundation, Domus Knights supports disengaged high school students through intensive one-on-one relationships. Domus is the program provider at Stamford High School, helping identified students develop the social and emotional skills, attitudes and habits needed to graduate high school and succeed in college or career. Among students participating in the Domus Knights program in 2019, 84 percent were promoted to the next grade level on time.

Fighting Food Insecurity

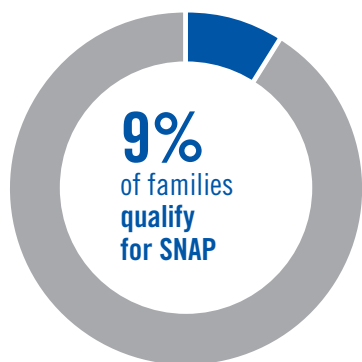
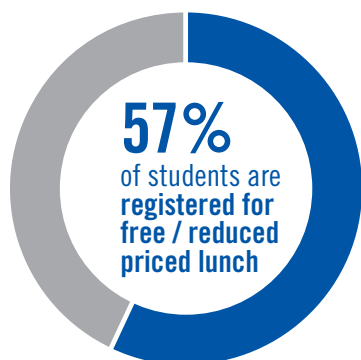
Children cannot develop and learn appropriately without reliable and affordable sources of healthy nutrition. Stamford Cradle to Career (SC2C) is strengthening food security within Stamford's school-age population and their families with improved food access, nutritional education and promotion of healthy eating habits.

Throughout 2019, SC2C worked closely with the Stamford Food Collaborative to identify ways to align resources, eliminate duplication points and streamline the distribution process. Every Stamford Public Schools (SPS) building now has infrastructure in place to support food-insecure students.

In the Spring of 2019, SC2C laid the groundwork to establish a Student Food Collaborative. The program aims to empower high school students to become leaders, role models and peer educators who support healthy change in their schools and communities. The project will establish a pipeline from local high schools to educational and career opportunities in the food service industry and food policy sector.

Nutrition Support at SPS: 2018

1,000+ meal backpacks
were distributed
every weekend
throughout
the school year.



SNAP provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy families so they can purchase healthy food and move towards self-sufficiency.

Source: Stamford Public Schools

Closing the Gap

In addition to breakfast and lunch offered at all schools, Chartwells, the in-house food service company, worked with SPS to establish supper programs at middle and high schools. The voluntary programs offer free grab-and-go meals to any student who is participating in after-school enrichment, tutoring or athletics. Extending the support, Filling in the Blanks provides meals on weekends throughout the school year, supporting over 1,000 students on a weekly basis.

The Food Resource Action Council says 80 percent of kids nationwide who get free and reduced priced lunches during the school year are not taking advantage of summer meal programs. In June of 2019, United Way, End Hunger Connecticut! and Chartwells, with the help of community volunteers, collaborated on a Summer Meals Blitz to hand out flyers to spread the word about free summer meal programs for kids under 18.

In July of 2019, SPS held three open sessions for free and reduced lunch applications in the lobby of the Government Center. Translators were also on hand. The result was a 5 percent increase in registered students.

“If we want kids to be ready to learn,
we have to make sure their basic needs are met.
SC2C is working to identify barriers we can remove so that all
kids are at a level playing field to accept and retain new information.”

Olympia Della Flora
Associate Superintendent, Stamford Public Schools

From School to Career

College and Career Readiness Community Action Network

As a community, we want all students to find success in life, whether it be through postsecondary schooling, apprenticeships, certificate programs or career pathways. With the vision to build economic mobility and success for all students in Stamford, our **College and Career Readiness Network** focuses on activities that build a foundation of basic life and essential skills needed by students pursuing college, career or postsecondary training after high school.

Leadership

Rebecca Wilson

Coordinator for College and Career Readiness and School Counselor Services, K-12, Stamford Public Schools

Tina Rivera

Principal, Academy of Information Technology & Engineering

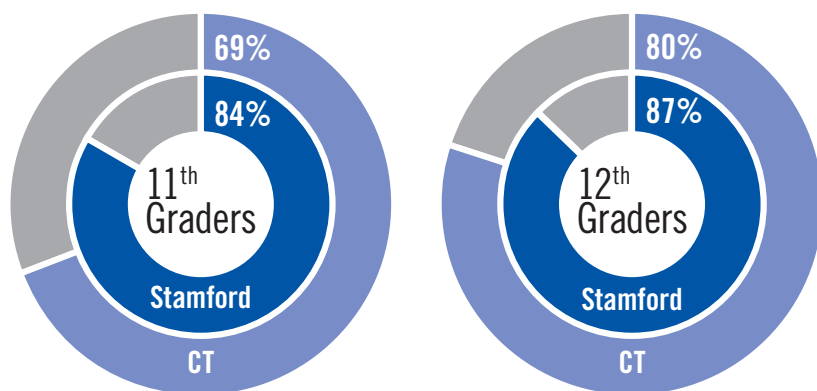
Jennienne Burke

Stamford Board of Education

Enrollment in College and Career Readiness Courses

Stamford Public Schools (SPS) is focused on increasing enrollment in College and Career Readiness Courses. Stamford outpaces the state average in student enrollment in Advanced Placement® (AP), International Baccalaureate® (IB), Career and Technical Education (CTE), workplace experience and dual enrollment courses. The district has seen significant increases in participation among English-language learners and students who qualify for free and reduced priced lunch.

City vs. State Comparison



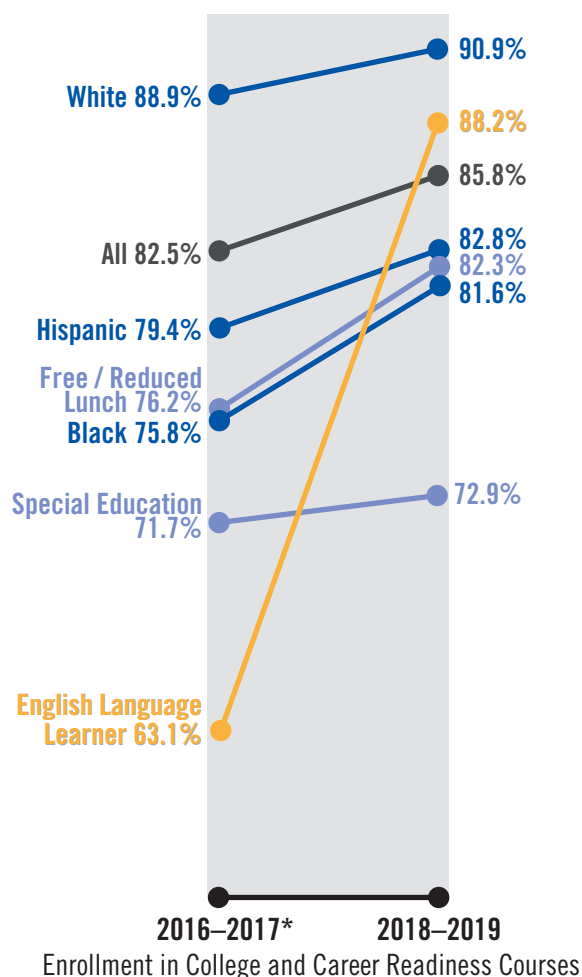
Source: State Accountability Index

“Our ultimate goal is that our young adults, no matter their background, circumstance or race, find jobs and careers that allow them to move beyond living paycheck-to-paycheck and thrive as members of our community.”

Tina Rivera

Principal, Academy of Information, Technology & Engineering

11th Grade Detail



*Earliest data available from SPS

A Bridge to College

One of the areas of focus for Stamford Cradle to Career's (SC2C) work is to reduce the number of students who graduate but do not start college in the fall as planned, a phenomenon known as summer melt. Nationally, numbers vary widely, but summer melt can affect up to 40 percent of the graduating population. Community college-bound students, low-income students, and students who are the first in their families to go to college are disproportionately affected.

Starting the summer of 2019, the Bridge to College pilot program sought to address this phenomenon, which affected 38 percent of 2018 Stamford Public Schools graduates who had planned to attend Norwalk Community College (NCC). During the summer, Bridge to College provided resources, support and guidance to almost 50 prospective first-generation college students. Counselors also worked with students to overcome potential hurdles—familial and logistical planning, applications, financial aid and the class selection process.

Aligning the efforts of SPS, NCC and additional like-minded partner organizations including Stamford Public Education Foundation and Future Five, SC2C obtained private funding, leveraged SPS resources for Bridge to College, and provided backbone support.

Exceeding the pilot goal to serve 35 students, 48 students participated, and **33** of them started college classes in the fall of 2019—an improved 31 percent “melt” rate. Plans are underway to expand Bridge to College for 2020, opening it to more SPS students planning to attend NCC and other colleges. Through collaboration and integration with the RISE Network Partnership being utilized at Westhill High School, the 2020 program will also include push-text message reminders that students can reply to with questions, comments, and/or requests for in-person meetings. Bridge to College will be even more critical going forward, as summer melt numbers are expected to increase as a result of COVID-19's impact on education this spring.



Photo by Erik Trautmann, Stamford Advocate

“We want every high school graduate who intends to go to college in the fall to make it there. Bridge to College is a tiered approach to fill the opportunity gap that exists for many of our Stamford graduates.”

Rebecca Wilson

Coordinator for College and Career Readiness, Stamford Public Schools

Looking Ahead: Skill Building for Success

Our Skill Building for Success initiative has identified specific skills based on both the Community for Education basic life readiness skills and the National Association of Colleges and Employers' essential skills standards that are critical to youth success in college and career. The first step we are taking is to build awareness and standardize language for these skills so there is consistency across the community. The second step is collaborating with non-profit providers, schools, businesses, students, parents and the city to share and enhance practices for helping students build these skills. Through this work we can ensure that our young adults—no matter their background, circumstance or race—find jobs and careers that allow them to thrive and earn a livable, sustainable wage in this community.

We Promote Equity

Stamford families come to our classrooms and community programs with diverse backgrounds of experiences, resources and needs, speaking more than 70 languages and celebrating varied cultural traditions. The reality is that the diversity we celebrate also presents challenges. We know that biases and systemic racism persist in society and our classrooms, workplaces and wider community.

The Stamford Cradle to Career (SC2C) Race Equity Initiative seeks to address systemic change through collective awareness, learning, best-practice sharing and taking action, starting at the agency level.

Finding a Common Language

SC2C has rallied in support of adopting a common language and consistent definitions across agencies and organizations. By raising awareness and providing training on structural and institutional racism, we can help our community become more inclusive and more responsive to the needs and concerns of Stamford communities of color.

For more than 10 years, key influencers from across Stamford have come together annually for Domus' Undoing Racism summer workshops, a forum that raises awareness about the social and economic consequences of bias and racism. Building on the Domus efforts, SC2C asked partner agencies to look inward at their own histories "Through the Lens of Race." This involved agencies and institutions researching their board and staff compositions and past hiring practices. Eleven agencies have, with a third of these having established internal committees to champion race equity and diversity work within their organizations. SC2C's Community Task Force is committed to identifying and dismantling racial inequity and reducing the opportunity gap at the systemic, organizational and individual level.

“We all have the capacity to be organizers, whether within our individual family or within the institution. We all have a voice and the ability to challenge and impact change.”

*Donn Reid
Chief Values Officer, Domus*

Leading by Example: Saint Joseph Parenting Center

The mission of Saint Joseph Parenting Center (SJPC) is to strengthen families that are at risk of child abuse and neglect by providing parenting education and support. In the past few years, SJPC's staff have examined the impact that institutional racism has had on families and how the organization can better understand and respond to families' needs. This process helped SJPC recognize that the stresses created by perpetual inequality contribute to unhealthy parenting patterns. SJPC also applied insights to their internal staffing and organization strategies.

In 2018–2019, SJPC reviewed policies and practices through the lens of race, and in July 2019, welcomed a new Executive Director, Rhonda Neal, an African-American woman with community experience. Leading by example, Neal has guided staff and board members through courageous conversations on the value of diversity and is working with SC2C to identify ways to build diversity on non-profit boards in Stamford. While change takes time, SJPC is taking a leadership role in the non-profit community by demonstrating how to break down barriers and build stronger, more meaningful relationships within the community they serve.

Advancing Change

By encouraging a common language around race and equity, and fostering leadership and activism skills at all levels, SC2C is laying the groundwork for community change. Here's how:

1

Fostering Organizational Awareness

SC2C works to create a clear understanding of racism and bias. By raising awareness and leaning into the conversation, we are growing in our understanding of how bias impacts our views, leadership and policies, as well as how to authentically engage the community.

2

Educating the Community for Action

By engaging a wide spectrum of individuals across our community, we are encouraging training and ongoing dialogue about racial equity and diversity literacy. Additionally, we are building individual and group capacity to address systemic issues with the goal of improving Stamford for all.

3

Impacting Change

As a community, we will discover strategies to break the cycles of reinforced racism and inequity and create a movement to result in systemic change.

Cultivating Conversation and Understanding: Stamford's Everyday Democracy

In July 2019, the Ferguson Library launched a multi-session dialogue series entitled "Facing Racism in Stamford." The preparation for the launch took over a year and was the creation of a newly established community coalition, Stamford's Everyday Democracy. The goal was to address racial issues in our city through a series of conversations to identify existing inequities and build relationships among neighbors.

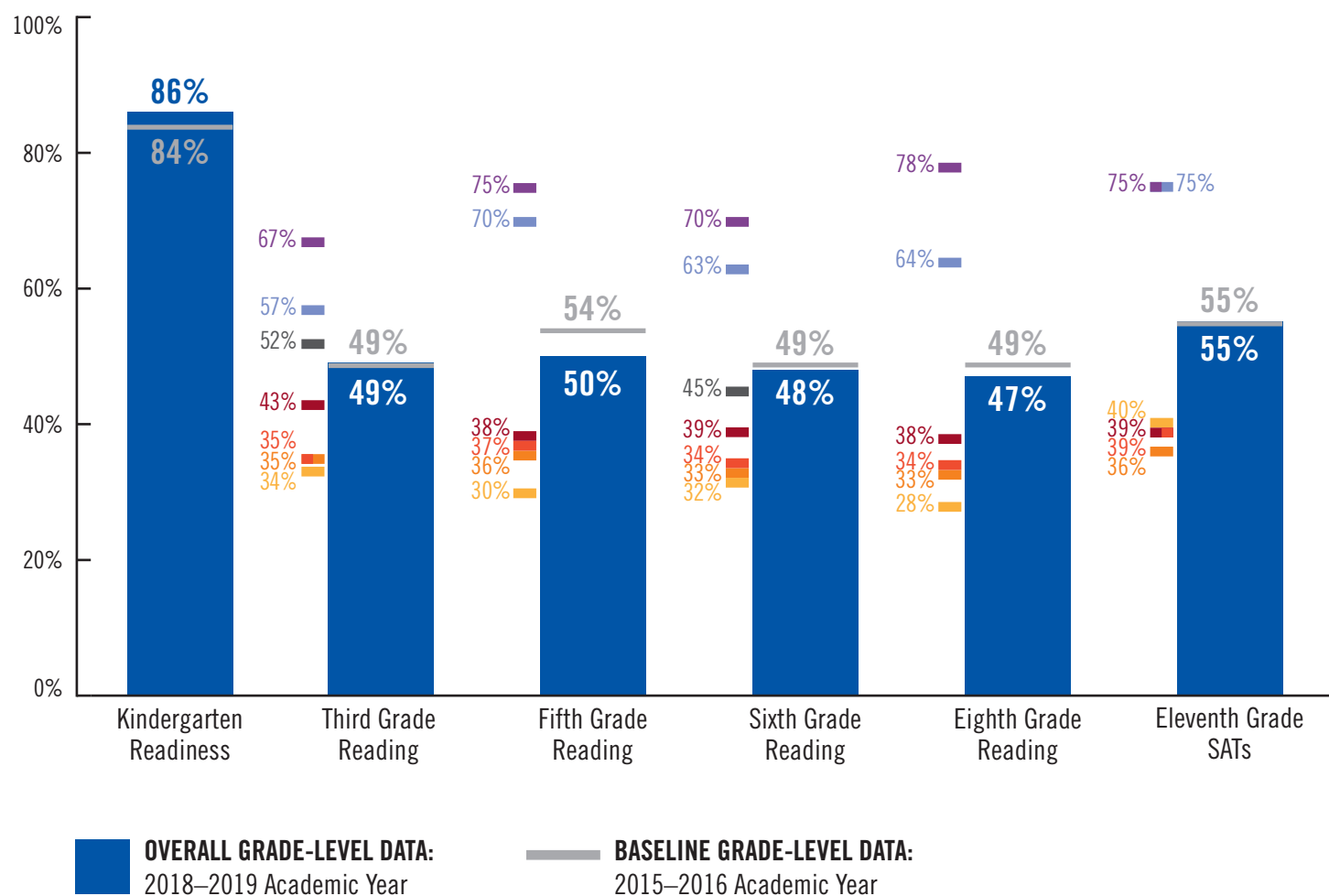
The series brought together a diverse group of community members to dissect and discuss our ethnic and racial identities, evaluate our community institutions through the lens of race and equity, and create change through grassroots efforts. The series resulted in the formation of community action teams focused on key systemic changes including bail bond reform, a more equitable approach to affordable housing, and enhancing the sense of community and belonging in neighborhoods across Stamford.

A Closer Look at the Data

The following pages provide a snapshot of the progress that is being made across the Stamford Cradle to Career (SC2C) continuum, comparing current data with our Baseline Report capturing 2015–2016 indicators. While some data points illustrate the results of our efforts, there is much more work to be done. Recognizing that we are Stronger Together, SC2C will continue to identify and support programs that address these key indicators.

Academic Proficiency

School Readiness and Reading

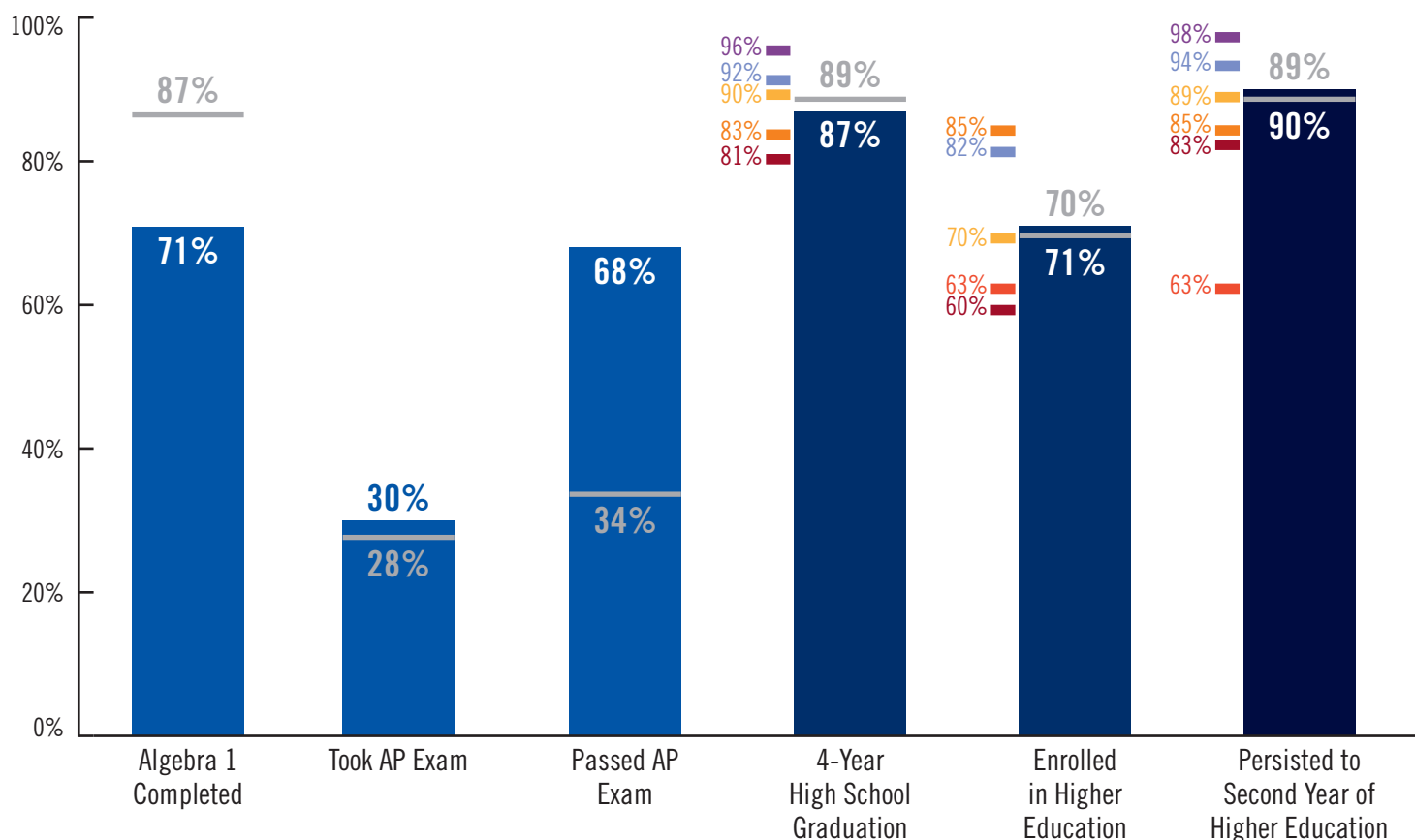


Source: Connecticut Department of Education

Third through eighth grade reading proficiency metrics represent the percentage of students scoring at a Level 3 or 4 in English-Language Arts (ELA) on the Starter Balanced Assessment. Eleventh grade reading proficiency metrics represent the percentage of students scoring at Level 3 or 4 in Evidence Based Reading and Writing and Math on the SAT.

*High Needs metrics include Special Education and English Language Learner populations

College Readiness, Enrollment and Persistence

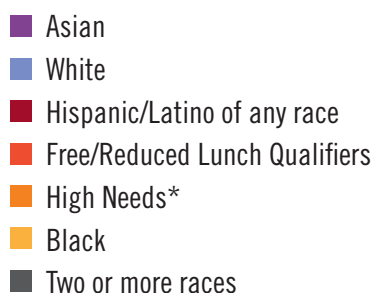


OVERALL POPULATION DATA (most recent available):



— **BASELINE POPULATION DATA:**
 2015-2016 Academic Year

PERCENTAGES BY RACE / ETHNICITY AND HIGH NEEDS POPULATIONS:



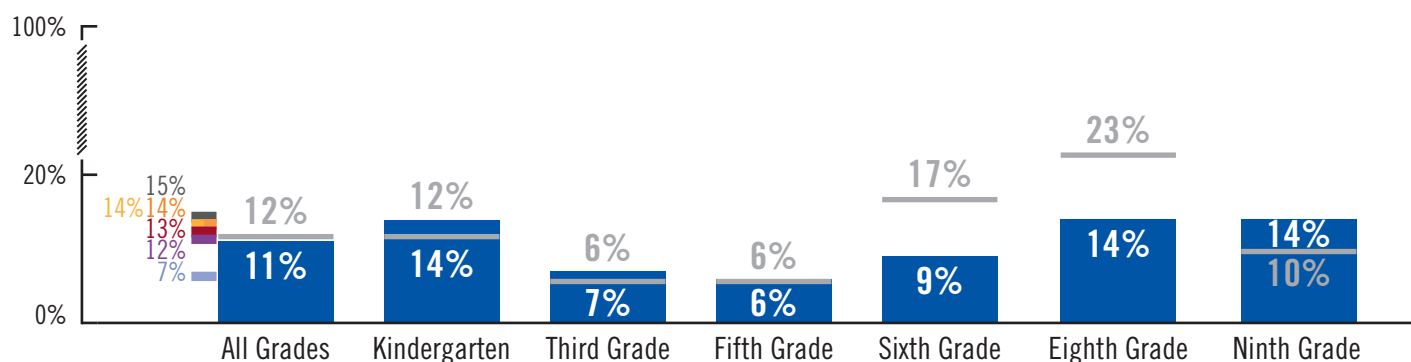
Source: Connecticut Department of Education

*High Needs metrics include Special Education and English Language Learner populations



Challenges to Academic Success

Chronic Absenteeism



OVERALL GRADE-LEVEL DATA:
2018-2019 Academic Year

**PERCENTAGES BY RACE / ETHNICITY
AND HIGH NEEDS POPULATIONS:**

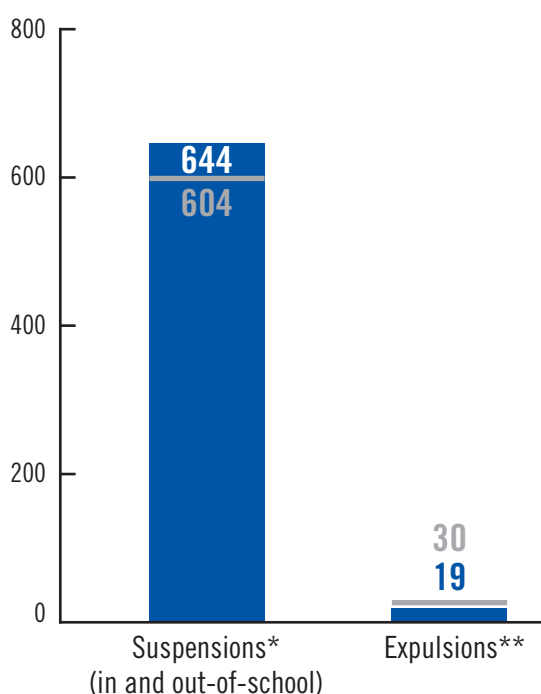
BASELINE GRADE-LEVEL DATA:
2015-2016 Academic Year

Source: Connecticut Department of Education

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or more of the school year regardless of the reason.

**High Needs metrics include Special Education and English Language Learner populations*

Disciplinary Incidents



OVERALL GRADE-LEVEL DATA:
2018-2019 Academic Year

BASELINE GRADE-LEVEL DATA:
2015-2016 Academic Year

Source: EdSight

**Number of students who received at least one in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension or expulsion*

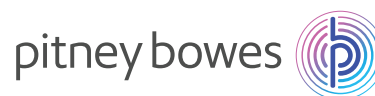
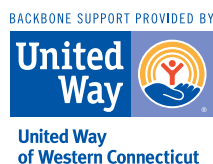
***Number of expulsion incidents*



Thank You!

Stamford Cradle to Career's efforts to improve educational outcomes for all Stamford students are supported by more than 60 community organizations from across our city and beyond. You have dedicated your time, talents and resources in championing our goals to support education and a vibrant, thriving community. Thank you for being part of our collective work!

Special recognition goes to the organizations that provide financial support to Stamford Cradle to Career:



We appreciate the contributions of those who volunteer their time to move SC2C's initiatives forward. Visit our website for a full list of members of our Community Action Networks, Communications Network, Data Network and Community Task Force.

Thank you to our past Executive Team and Advisory Council members:

Earl Kim, *Stamford Public Schools*

Cindy Grafstein, *City of Stamford*

Cynthia Lyon, *Business Council of Fairfield County*

And finally, thank you to Kim Kempton and Sarah Avellino for their work creating this report.



We Need You!



Stamford Cradle to Career invites all who want to see Stamford thrive—students, parents, business owners and community members—to join our efforts!

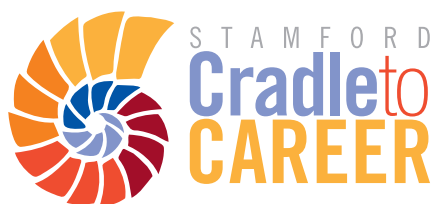
- Volunteer your time
- Provide feedback or suggestions
- Make a donation
- Share our story

Connect with us to stay up-to-date on our initiatives, community partners and volunteers, to read previous years' Community Reports, or to sign up for our newsletter.

@StamfordC2C



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