



North Hartford Ascend

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education Promise Neighborhoods Grant Program

September Community Conversation

Wednesday, September 16, 2026



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Facebook!*



**Por favor levante la mano si necesita
interpretación al español**

Spanish interpretation services are available. Please
see our translator for help.

Agenda



- Welcome & Guidelines
- Featured Topic: Hartford Public Schools
 - Student Support Services Dept - Dr. Stephanie Lockhart
 - Dual Enrollment - Driven2Inspire
- Next Steps and Closing Remarks
- **Next Meeting: October 21st, 2026**

Discussion Guidelines



- Everyone deserves to be heard. Listen and respond respectfully. Successful dialogue is the responsibility of all participants.
- Let's stay on topic– time is limited, so let's value each other's time.
 - Please use the index cards provided to submit questions at any time.

Incentive Available to Hartford Residents

North Hartford Ascend: Overview

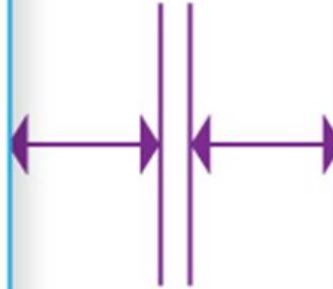


Connect children and families, prenatal through career, living in the
North Hartford Promise Zone to the programs, services and other resources they need to **reach their full potential.**

Current State

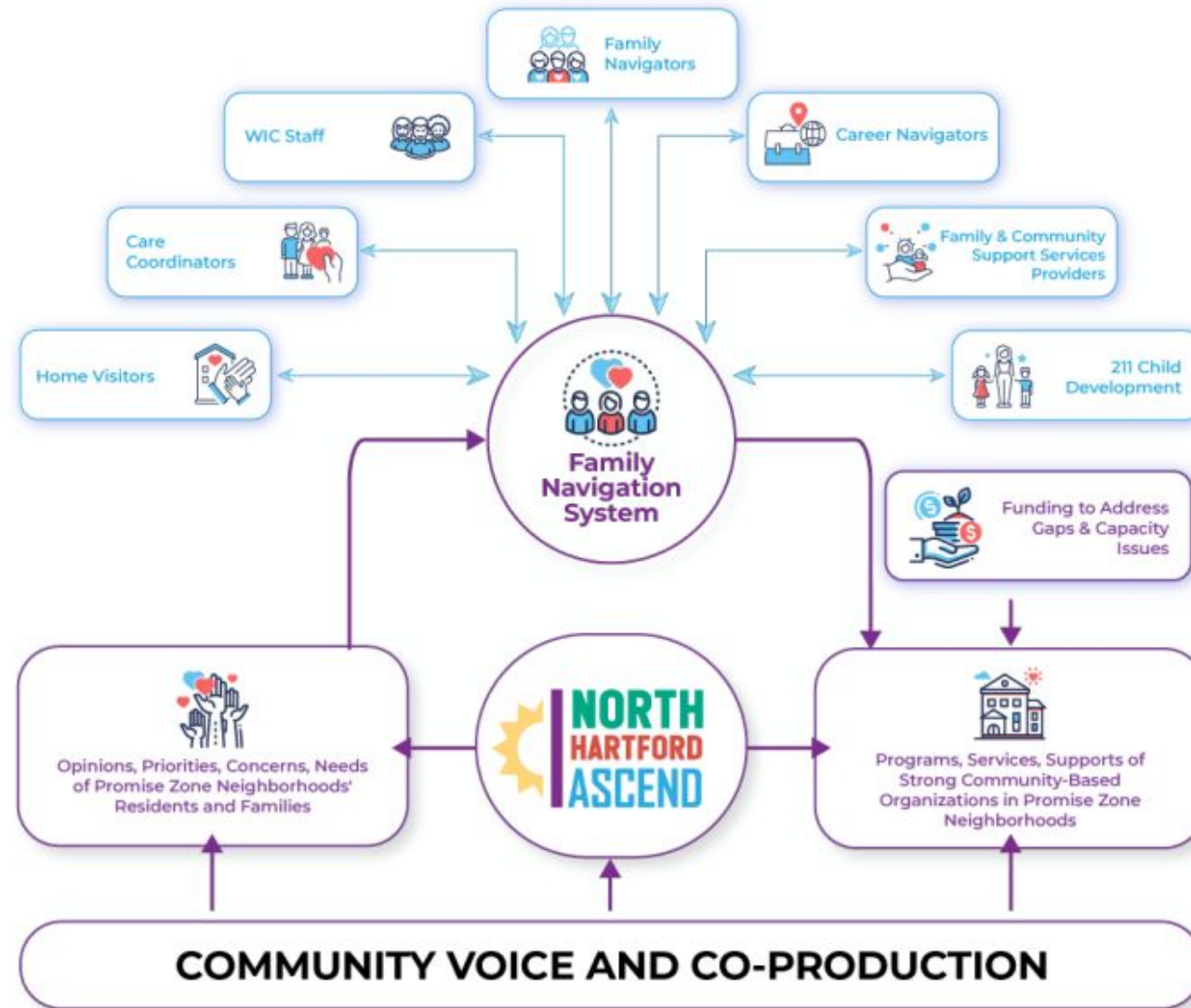


Opinions, Priorities,
Concerns, Needs of Promise
Zone Neighborhoods'
Residents and Families



Strong Array of Programs,
Services, Supports of Community-
Based Organizations in Promise
Zone Neighborhoods

Ideal State-Ascend System Building



Ascend & Community Updates

Ascend & Community Updates



Community Workshops: In-Person

Financial Stability During a Career Transition

[Tuesday, September 22](#)

Parker Memorial at 6pm

- Build a realistic budget for your transition, talk honestly about credit, and point you to free resources across Connecticut.

Workshops





Set the bar. Meet the bar. Exceed the bar. Raise the bar!

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Dr. Stephanie Lockhart,
Executive Director





Our Mission

To provide all our students with the learning and supports they need to succeed in school and in life.

Our Vision

All students will graduate prepared to transform our world.

Our Values

Excellence • Equity • Inclusiveness • Collaboration • Transparency • Continuous Improvement



A word cloud shaped like a handprint, with the word 'HOPE' in the center. Other words include 'LIFE', 'GIVE', 'SUPPORT', 'COMMUNITY', 'WORK', 'RELIEF', 'DONATION', 'VOLUNTEERING TEAM', 'POOR', 'ASSISTANCE', 'FRIENDSHIP', 'MONEY', 'TOGETHERNESS', 'GIVING', 'HOPE', 'RELIEF', 'DONATION', 'VOLUNTEERING TEAM', 'POOR', 'ASSISTANCE', 'FRIENDSHIP', 'MONEY', 'TOGETHERNESS'.



SUPPORTING STUDENTS THROUGH THE P.A.T.H. FRAMEWORK

Department Mission

Student Support Services partners with schools, families, and communities to remove barriers, strengthen belonging, promote wellness, and expand opportunities so every student has the support they need to succeed in school and life.

2026-2027 Focus Areas

- Chronic Absenteeism < 29.4%
- Positive School Culture Agreement $\geq$ 85%
- Total Suspension Rate $\leq$ 7.5% Suspensions
- PBIS Tier 1 TFI $\geq$ 80%
- Increased Graduation Rates

The PATH to Student Success



Students are
Present

Attendance
& Safety



Students are
Affirmed

Belonging &
Connection



Students are
Thriving

Emotional, Mental,
Physical, and
Social Health



Students are
Headed Forward

Purpose and
Pathways

WHAT WE DO



Set the bar. Meet the bar. Exceed the bar. Raise the bar!

Students are PRESENT

- Attendance
- Family outreach
- Home visits
- Justice Involved Youth
- McKinney-Vento
- Re-engagement
- School avoidance
- Safety transfers

Students are AFFIRMED

- Equity-centered practices
- MTSS
- PBIS
- School climate & culture
- Student conduct
- Student voice
- Restorative practices
- SEL implementation

Students are THRIVING

- 504 compliance
- Counseling
- Crisis response
- Intervention systems
- Mental health supports
- Nursing Services
- Social work
- Title IX

Students are HEADED FORWARD

- Alternative programming
- Career exploration
- College planning
- Credit recovery
- FAFSA completion
- Graduation planning
- Internships
- Workforce partnerships

PATH + RAISE THE BAR



Set the bar. Meet the bar. Exceed the bar. Raise the bar!

SET THE BAR

Identify Need & Establish High Expectations

Do we know who isn't showing up, and do we know quickly enough to intervene?

June 2027 Goal:

Reduce Chronic Absenteeism to < 29.4%

MEET THE BAR

Match Support & Build Systemic Coherence

Does a student experience belonging as soon as they walk into our building?

June 2027 Goal:

≥ 85% Staff Agreement on Positive Culture

EXCEED THE BAR

Monitor Progress & Adjust in Real- Time

Are we identifying needs early enough, or are students having to reach crisis before we respond?

June 2027 Goal:

≤ 7.5% Suspensions & ≥ 80% Tier 1 TFI

RAISE THE BAR

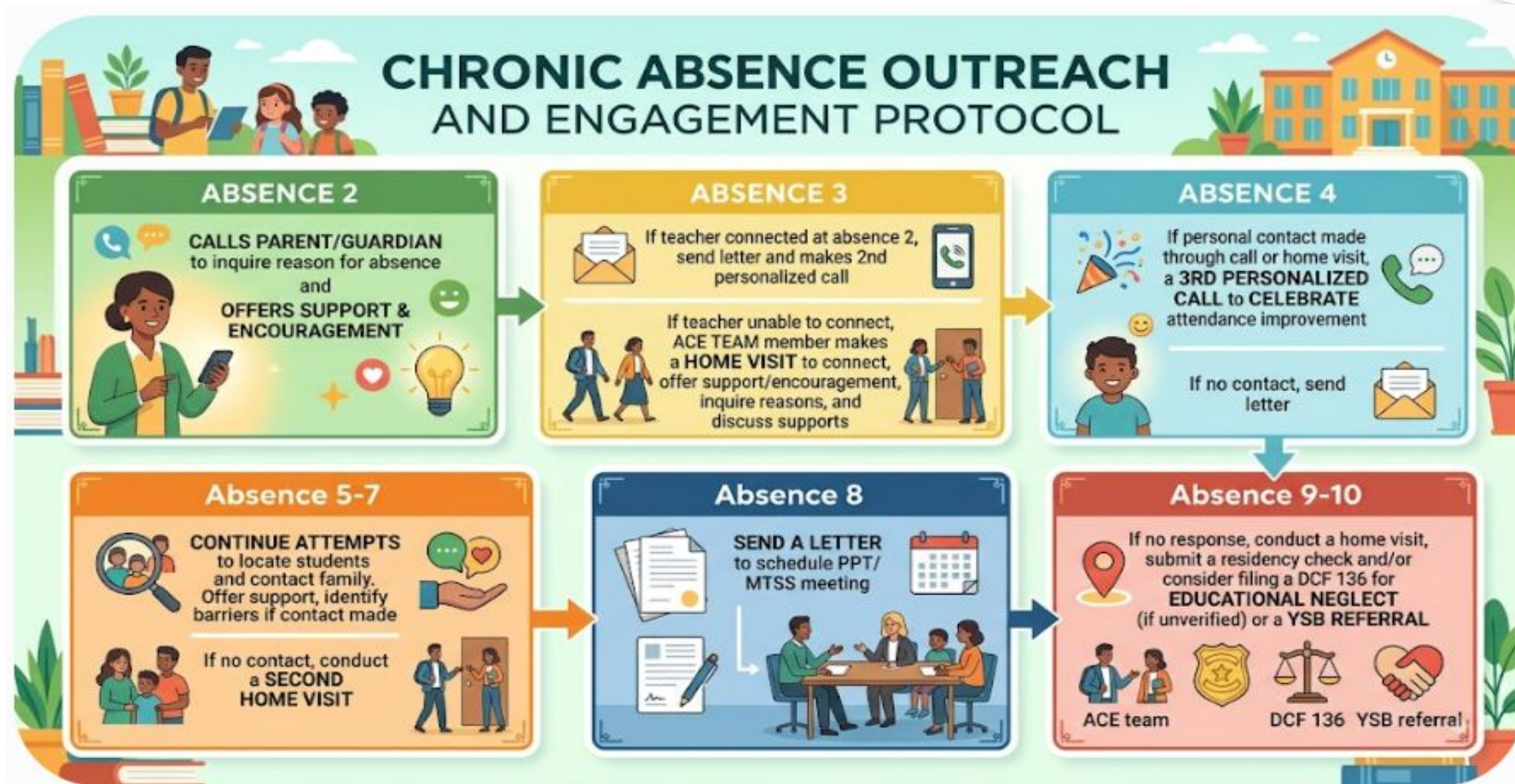
Continuously Improve Systems & outcomes

Are our systems and practices sustainable and evidence-based to ensure all of our students are successful after they leave us?

June 2027 Goal:

100% Adoption of Routines & Non Negotiables

STUDENTS ARE PRESENT



Students are AFFIRMED: Creating A Culture of Belonging

Core Value	HPS Action	Everyday Practice
Collaboration	Kids & Families Come First	Treat students like valued individuals; notify missed students; call home proactively with positive news.
Continuous Improvement	Set the Tone at the Door	Treat the doorway as the key transition point; smile and greet every student by name before instruction.
Equity	Proactive De-escalation & Safety	Create predictable routines and quiet regulation spaces; address emotional and learning needs early.
Excellence	High Expectations + Support	Hold students to grade-level standards with necessary scaffolding; believe in their full potential.
Inclusiveness	Walls That Speak Belonging	Reflect diverse student backgrounds and languages; ensure student work dominates room displays.
Transparency	Make Every Minute Count	Track attendance accurately in the first 20 min (secondary) or 60 min (elementary) to target



Risk Assessments

2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023- 24	2024- 25	2025-26
1214	987	629	1423	1,400	1,474	1,524	1843

**These are unique counts of cases.*

STUDENTS ARE THRIVING

- **What The Data Told Us:**

- Elevated risk assessments highlight increased anxiety and acute social-emotional triggers across grade levels.
- Classroom disruptions and dysregulation demonstrate the need for proactive coping skills rather than exclusion.

- **How We Move Forward:**

- Tier 1 (Universal Prevention): SEL Lessons, trauma-informed staff training, and de-escalation strategies to foster belonging.
- Tier 2 (Targeted Support): Group counseling for anxiety and attendance; reviving Early Warning Systems linking attendance dips to support teams.
- Tier 3 (Intensive Care): Community mental health partnerships for crisis wraparound care and structured reintegration plans.

Shift Away from Exclusion: Transitioning from suspensions (current 8% OSS / 11% overall) toward restorative practices to keep students engaged and in school.



STUDENTS ARE HEADED FORWARD

GRADE	# of Students	# of Students Taking Advanced Courses	% of Students Taking Advanced Courses
9	1165	113	9.7%
10	1099	208	18.9%
11	1042	389	37.3%
12	1141	491	43.0%



STUDENTS ARE HEADED FORWARD

	2024-25	2025-26
Students taking 2 or More AP or Dual Enrollment College Courses	16.2%	26.0%
4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	78.6%	85.3%

ACTION PLAN FOR CONTINUOUS INVOLVEMENT

- **PRESENT (Attendance & Staying on Track):** We monitor attendance closely so we can reach out early with support before missed days affect your child's grades or high school credits.
- **AFFIRMED (School Culture & Belonging):** We are placing dedicated School Climate Specialists in our high schools to foster safe, welcoming classrooms where students feel respected and learn positive ways to resolve conflicts.
- **THRIVING (Mental Health & Well-Being):** We provide daily emotional check-ins, expanded school counseling, and local community partnerships so every student has the mental health care and wellness tools they need.
- **HEADED FORWARD (Future & Graduation Prep):** Through strong community partnerships, we track every student's graduation credits and make sure every graduating senior leaves with a clear, personalized plan for college or a career.

Questions?



DUAL ENROLLMENT OPENS DOORS BEFORE GRADUATION

Dual Enrollment as a College-Readiness Strategy for Families

Presented By: Frank E. Brady & Nahkia S. Henry

FACILITATORS

- **Nahkia S. Henry** is a higher education and career development professional dedicated to helping students connect education to career success. A graduate of **Thomas Snell Weaver High School** and alumna of the **University of Connecticut**, she has served as a Career Beginnings Volunteer, Senior Manager at **INROADS**, and Director of Career Development at **Hartford Promise**.
- She currently serves as the **Associate Director of Career Education and Coaching** at the **Yale School of Management**, where she supports students in achieving their professional and leadership goals.



FACILITATORS

- **Frank E. Brady** is an educational consultant, youth development expert, and former educator with more than 20 years of experience helping young people thrive academically, personally, and professionally. As the founder of **Driven2Inspire**, he partners with schools, colleges, and community organizations to deliver engaging programs focused on student success, social-emotional learning, leadership, and college readiness. His work has impacted thousands of students nationwide, empowering them with the skills and confidence to succeed in school and life.



Welcome & Purpose

Today's Goal

- By the end of this session, families will:
 - Understand what dual enrollment
 - Learn how dual enrollment supports college readiness
 - Explore how students can earn college credit before graduation
 - Understand the long-term financial and academic benefits
 - Leave with a clear action plan



Why College Readiness Matters More Than Ever

College readiness is about opportunity.

• Students who are prepared for life after high school are more likely to:

- Enroll in college
- Persist through challenges
- Complete a degree
- Access higher-paying careers
- Build economic stability



Average Lifetime Earning Potential



High School
Diploma

\$1.6 million



Bachelor's
Degree

\$2.8 million



Master's
Degree

\$3.3 million

What Is Dual Enrollment?

Simple Definition

- Dual Enrollment allows students to earn college credits while still enrolled in high school.
- Students may take courses:
 - ✓ At their high school
 - ✓ Online
 - ✓ On a college campus
 - ✓ Through a partner institution



WHY DUAL ENROLLMENT MATTERS

Dual Enrollment gives students a head start on college and career success.

Saving	Saving time toward a college degree
Reducing	Reducing future college costs
Building	Building confidence for college
Exploring	Exploring careers and interests early
Strengthening	Strengthening college applications
Developing	Developing time management and independence
Experiencing	Experiencing college-level coursework while still receiving high school support

Why Dual Enrollment Matters (BENEFITS)

Academic

- College readiness
- Stronger study habits
- Increased confidence

Financial

- Potential tuition savings
- Reduced college course load

Personal

- Exposure to college expectations
- Increased independence
- Better preparation for life after high school

ACADEMIC

College readiness

Stronger study habits

Increased confidence

FINANCIAL

Potential tuition savings

Reduced college course
load

PERSONAL

Exposure to college expectations

Increased independence

Better preparation for life after high school

HOW TO GET STARTED

1. Get Admitted
2. Register For Classes
3. Participate in an Orientation
4. Engage with CT State Courses
and Resources
5. Reflect on Your Progress
6. Check Your Transcript





WHY

HARTFORD

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SUPPORTS DUAL
ENROLLMENT

Equity & Access

Dual enrollment can be especially impactful for:

- First-generation college students
- Students from underrepresented communities
- Students who may not see themselves as “college material”
- Because exposure creates confidence.
- Confidence creates action.
- Action creates opportunity.



Resources & Questions

- Family & Student Success Guide
- Student Dual Enrollment Action Plan
- Time Blocking Form

THANK YOU!



Questions?

Stay Connected

- Follow us on social media to stay connected!

Instagram



Facebook



Thank You!

- **Next Conversations:**

- October 21st, in-person at 6pm
- November 18th, in-person at 6pm

- Please take the [Post Meeting Feedback & Incentive Survey](#) to share your thoughts and feedback and access the incentive for Hartford residents. Use the QR code, or visit the link sent out via email following the meeting.

- *Please note: Incentives may take up to one week to process.*

- Contact nhap@connecticutchildrens.org with any questions.

Feedback & Incentive



Community Workshops

