



## Glossary of Terms

**Accountability:** the notion that people (e.g., teachers, administrators) or an organization (e.g., a school, school district, state department of education) are held responsible for improving student achievement.

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP):** an individual state's measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards. It is the minimum level of improvement that states, school districts, and schools must achieve each year, according to the No Child Left Behind Act.

**Alignment:** the degree to which assessments, curriculum, instruction, instructional materials, professional development, and accountability systems reflect and reinforce the educational program's objectives and standards.

**Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMO):** three targets are measured for English language learners in districts that receive Title III grant funding. Two are in the area of English language acquisition measuring progress and proficiency rates from year to year. The third target is AYP if the subgroup of ELLs in a district is 40 or more.

**Assessment:** the measurement of knowledge, skills and beliefs to determine the level of student achievement in a particular content area (e.g., performance-based assessments, written exams, quizzes).

**Benchmark:** a description of a specific level of student achievement expected of students at particular ages, grades, developmental levels, or during a specific point in the school year.

**Benchmark Assessment:** interim assessments administered periodically to measure students' mastery of standards-based curriculum objectives.

**Best Practice:** a technique or methodology that has been proven to reliably lead to a desired result through research and experience.

**Big Idea:** key generalization or enduring understanding that students will take with them after the completion of a learning unit.

**Blueprint for Reading Achievement:** Connecticut document that is based upon the consensus of the Early Reading Success Panel members, which provides a general overview of basic research findings about reading, including the nature of skilled reading, the competencies important in reading achievement, and the components of a comprehensive, high-quality curriculum of reading instruction. The Blueprint also includes competencies required for reading success for children in kindergarten through Grade 3.

**Beyond the Blueprint:** Connecticut document that builds upon the *Blueprint for Reading Achievement* by providing guidance on the teaching of reading to students in Grades 4 through 12, as well as across content areas.

**Cause Data:** information based on actions of adults in the school system.

**Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI):** is a statewide model of continuous school and district improvement with the goal of closing Connecticut's achievement gaps.

**Common Assessments:** a broad term for assessments that are given routinely to all students in a grade and/or content area and that are the same for all students in a grade or course. Common assessments may be summative or formative.

**Common Formative Assessments (CFA):** assessments that are the same across a grade level and/or content area, are used to inform and adjust instruction, and are not used to evaluate student progress for a grade.

**Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP):** cognitive academic language typically takes 5-7 years to develop.

**Curriculum:** guaranteed course of study and learning objectives that integrates standards, instructional strategies, materials, and assessments to ensure that all students are able to achieve standards.

**Curriculum-based Measures (CBM):** measures for ongoing monitoring of students' progress through a curriculum.

**Curriculum Framework:** The Connecticut framework for a content area or developmental level (i.e., early childhood) that provides the guidelines for PK–12 student learning.

**Cut Points:** cutoff scores on common benchmark assessments; cut points specify the score at or below which students would be considered for interventions.

**Data-Driven Decision Making (DDDM):** a process by which district leaders, school leaders, teachers and parents review cause and effect data to determine strengths and prioritize areas in need of improvement to inform instruction, curriculum and policy decisions to positively impact student achievement.

**Data Teams:** teams of educators that participate in collaborative, structured, scheduled meetings, which focus on the effectiveness of teaching as determined by student achievement. Data Teams adhere to continuous improvement cycles, analyze trends, and determine strategies to facilitate analysis that results in action. Data Teams can occur at the state, district, school, and instructional level.

**Data Team Leader:** educator who is responsible for leading the data team. Responsibilities may include facilitating meetings, communicating work to the larger community, focusing discussions

around data, challenging assumptions, establishing meeting agendas, meeting monthly with principal and other Data Team leaders, and championing the work of data-driven decision making.

**Decision Rules:** clear, specific guidelines for making data-driven decisions (e.g., at least 80 percent of students should be meeting academic benchmarks for the core curriculum to be considered effective).

**Differentiated Instruction (DI):** an approach to teaching that emphasizes ways to meet the differing needs and learning styles of students within the general education setting; for example, through the use of flexible small groups, different instructional materials, or different ways of presenting the same content.

**District Data Team (DDT):** team of central office educators, with teacher, administrator and support staff representation, who meet monthly to monitor the implementation and efficacy of district improvement plans, and analyze disaggregated benchmark data from all schools in the district to make curriculum and policy decisions.

**District Reference Group (DRG):** classification system in which districts that have public school students with similar socioeconomic status and need are grouped together. Grouping like-districts together is useful in order to make legitimate comparisons among districts.

**Effect Data:** student achievement results from various measurements.

**Effective Teaching Strategies (ETS):** nine categories of research-based instructional strategies that were identified to be most effective in a meta-analysis conducted by Marzano, Pickering & Pollock (2001). They include: identifying similarities and differences; summarizing and note taking; reinforcing effort and providing recognition; homework and practice; nonlinguistic representations; cooperative learning; setting objectives and providing feedback; generating and testing hypotheses; cues, questions and advance organizers. Connecticut has added a tenth strategy, non-fiction writing, based on the research of Douglas Reeves.

**English Language Learners (ELLs):** please see *Limited English Proficient*.

**English as a Second Language (ESL):** a method of instruction for students who are learning English as a new language; usually involves pulling students out of the regular class for specific English instruction and/or providing ESL support in the mainstream class.

**Essential Question:** open-ended question with emotive force that invites students into the learning process and establishes a learning goal of being able to answer the essential question with a big idea at the end of an instructional unit.

**Fidelity of Implementation:** use and delivery of curricula, instructional strategies, behavioral systems, and interventions in the manner they were designed and intended to be used (e.g., adhering to the treatment time and key features required for a particular intervention).

**Formative Assessment:** process used by teachers to determine how to adjust instruction in response to student needs, and by students to adjust learning strategies. Formative assessments are used to inform and adjust instruction, and are not used to evaluate student progress for a grade.

**Grade Level Expectations (GLE):** a description of what students should know and be able to do at the end of a grade level.

**Goal Line:** graphically, this is the line connecting the student's baseline performance to a data point representing the long-range goal (also referred to as an aimline).

**High-leverage Adult Action:** specific actions taken by adults to “cause” student achievement outcomes (e.g., one hundred percent of faculty, student support staff and administrators will participate in the data team process).

**Holistic Accountability:** a system that includes not only academic achievement scores, but also specific information on curriculum, teaching and leadership practices. It includes a balance of quantitative and qualitative indicators which focus on the progress of individual students. Holistic accountability includes Tier I, II and III Indicators (Douglas Reeves, 2004).

**Horizontal Data Team:** team of educators that are responsible for data analysis and instructional/curricular decision-making for a particular grade level.

**Instructional Data Team:** team of educators that are responsible for data analysis and instructional/curricular decision-making for a particular grade level (horizontal team) or content area across grade levels (vertical team); they include school leaders, specialists, and behavioral/mental health personnel. Common formative assessment data and samples of student work are analyzed to identify strengths and weaknesses in student learning and determine what adult actions and instructional strategies will best address students and learning objectives. The team reconvenes to analyze the effectiveness of the selected strategies as determined by common summative assessments.

**LAS Links (Language Assessment Scales):** state mandated annual assessment to determine English Proficiency.

**Limited English Proficient (Federal term, CT-ELL):** the identification given to students who score below proficiency LAS Links reading and writing.

**Looking at Student Work (LASW):** the collaborative analysis of student work by educators using a structured protocol to inform instruction; it is an integral component of the Data Team process.

**Local Norms:** average patterns of performance defined in relation to a local population, such as that of a school or district.

**Long-term Student Outcome:** specific indicators used to determine whether state and district learning expectations have been achieved as evidenced by student “effect” data (e.g., The percentage of Latino students that are proficient in estimation will increase from 57 percent to 75 percent as measured by the spring 2010 Connecticut Mastery Test).

**Model for Curriculum:** The Connecticut model for curriculum provides guidance for district curriculum development by including instructional resources aligned with the GLE. These resources could include sample learning activities, lesson plans, literacy and technology applications, etc.

**National Norms:** average patterns of performance defined in relation to a national population.

**Pacing Guide:** The Connecticut pacing guide provides sequenced GLEs over the four quarters of a school year.

**Performance-based Assessment (PBA):** an assessment of student learning that calls for a demonstration and/or application of learned content that is integrated into lessons.

**Priority Standard:** learning standard that a school district has determined to be of particular importance for the students, based on what has been collaboratively determined, based on data and professional judgment to be important in life, school and on the state assessment. Priority standards are standards that endure over time, give students leverage in other content areas and prepare them for the next grade. Priority standards are revisited on an annual basis so that revisions can be made as new data are available (also known as a Power Standard).

**Professional Learning Community (PLC):** collegial group of educators who are united in their commitment to continuous adult and student learning, work and learn collaboratively to realize a common mission, visit and review other classrooms, and participate in decision making.

**Progress Monitoring:** regularly using data to track students' progress toward a goal, or a school or district's progress toward a goal for increased student achievement.

**Reciprocal Accountability:** "If the district (or state) is to hold schools accountable for producing specific outcomes for their students, the district (or state) has the responsibility to provide those schools with the resources (human, material and intellectual) and the conditions necessary to produce those outcomes" (Elmore in Hess, 2006, p.119).

**Response to Intervention (RtI):** please see *Scientific Research-Based Interventions*.

**Results Indicators:** describe the specific behaviors (both student and adult) that the Data Team expects to see as a result of implementing agreed-upon strategies. Results indicators help Data Teams to determine whether or not the strategies, if implemented with fidelity, are working prior to a summative assessment so that mid-course corrections can be made.

**Rubric:** scoring guide composed of set criteria and related levels of proficiency that is used to evaluate a student's performance, product, or project.

**School Climate:** the nature of the interrelationships among people in the school community physically, emotionally and intellectually; how the people within the school community treat one another (adult to adult interactions, adult to student interactions and student to student interactions) through their actions, verbal and non-verbal exchanges, tone of voice and the use/abuse of inherent power advantages.

**School Data Team:** team of school educators, including the principal, teacher representatives, and behavioral/mental support staff, who meet monthly to monitor the implementation and efficacy of the school improvement plan, and monitor the progress of Instructional Data Teams to make curriculum and policy decisions.

**Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI):** the use of educational practices, which have been validated through research as effective, for improved student outcomes. Educational practices that are implemented in a school or district which, through data analysis, demonstrate effectiveness (also known as Response to Intervention).

**Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP):** a model of instructional strategies that will make course content accessible to English Language Learners-teachers and administrators may assess their own lessons to determine if they are employing the recommended sheltered strategies.

**Slope:** a student's rate of improvement. Slope is determined by how the student is responding to the intervention.

**SMART Goal:** a goal that is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant/realistic, time-bound (e.g., The percentage of sixth grade students that are proficient in estimation will increase from 57 percent to 75 percent as measured by the spring 2010 Connecticut Mastery Test.

**Summative Assessment:** assessment that is employed mainly to assess cumulative student learning at a particular point in time (e.g., the Connecticut Mastery Test, the Connecticut Academic Performance Test).

**Teacher Support/Intervention Teams:** teams of educators that are responsible for data analysis and decision-making in Tier II and Tier III, and that may overlap with data teams. They include certain core members (e.g., the school principal, the school psychologist), as well as other members that may rotate on and off the team, depending on the needs of the student under consideration (e.g., special educators, reading/language arts consultants or coaches).

**Tier III Indicator:** narrative analysis of relationship between Tiers I and II; this can include conclusions, questions raised, next steps, etc.

**Tier I in Scientific Research-Based Interventions:** the general education core curriculum, instruction, and social/behavioral supports for all students, with adequate differentiation of instruction.

**Tier II in Scientific Research-Based Interventions:** short-term interventions for struggling students who have not responded adequately to the Tier I core curriculum and differentiation of instruction; it is part of the general education system.

**Tier III in Scientific Research-Based Interventions:** more intensive or individualized short-term interventions for students who fail to respond adequately to the Tier I core curriculum and differentiation of instruction; it is part of the general education system.

**Title III (Grant Program of NCLB):** Sets requirements for placement and programming of ELLs.

**Trendline:** the single line of best fit when the student's successive scores during intervention are plotted on a graph; the slope of the trendline shows the student's rate of improvement.

**Unwrapped Standard:** a standard that has been analyzed by educators so that it is clear what students need to know and be able to do once they have attained proficiency.

**Vertical Data Team:** team of teachers who teach the same content in different grade levels who are responsible for data analysis and instructional/curricular decision-making, with regards to a specific content area.

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