

Trumbull Public Schools Ranks 4th in the State

Trumbull, CT- Recently released State Department of Education 2021 Next Generation Accountability Report Card results establish a promising outlook for the rebuilding of Trumbull Public Schools post pandemic. “Beginning my superintendency during a pandemic and after a major reduction in staff, I knew we had to be strategic and focus on the instructional core,” said Superintendent Martin J. Semmel in a recent interview. “These results indicate what we always knew—that Trumbull has highly effective educators and when we collaborate with families to focus on high quality instruction and make sure that every child is learning, the results will follow. It’s really about a commitment to excellence and good teaching.”

On December 9th, the results were made public that Trumbull Public Schools ranks 4th in the state above several neighboring towns (see Table 1 for a list of the Top 25 districts in the state). The report measures districts and schools in their ability to earn points across a broad set of 12 indicators: achievement, growth, chronic absenteeism, college and career readiness, high school graduation, postsecondary entrance, physical fitness, and the arts. It aims to evaluate the ways in which districts and schools are preparing its students for success in college, careers, and life. Performance on each indicator is measured against a target, and student group performance receives additional weight in the system. The Accountability Index is the percentage of points earned across all available indicators.

Table 1: 2021- *Next Generation Accountability Score Rankings*

District	DRG	Score	Rank
Wilton School District	A	89.87	1
Essex School District	C	86.47	2
Darien School District	A	85.68	3
Trumbull School District	B	85.58	4
New Canaan School District	A	84.88	5
Guilford School District	B	84.74	6
Weston School District	A	84.33	7
Woodbridge School District	B	84.18	8
Regional School District 09	A	82.59	9
Madison School District	B	82.46	10
Greenwich School District	B	82.29	11

South Windsor School District	B	82.25	12
Regional School District 17	C	82.12	13
Cornwall School District	D	81.76	14
Old Saybrook School District	D	81.73	15
Regional School District 16	E	81.70	16
Rocky Hill School District	D	81.68	17
Monroe School District	B	81.48	18
Regional School District 18	C	81.48	19
Westport School District	A	81.48	20
Marlborough School District	C	81.38	21
Stamford Charter School for Excellence	N/A	81.36	22
Glastonbury School District	B	81.18	23
Granby School District	B	81.15	24
Fairfield School District	B	81.04	25

Elementary Schools Soar

The results not only rank Trumbull in 4th position in the state, but have also resulted in 5 out of 6 Trumbull Elementary Schools earning *Category 1 School of Distinction* status based on high growth, high performance, or both. No other district in the state has as many schools in their district with this rating. (See Table 2 for a list of Trumbull Schools of Distinction).

Table 2: *Trumbull Category 1 Schools of Distinction*

Category 1 School of Distinction	Score	Reason for Distinction
Booth Hill Elementary School	88.7	High Performance and High Growth
Daniels Farm Elementary School	92.6	High Performance and High Growth
Jane Ryan Elementary School	85.7	High Performance and High Growth
Middlebrook Elementary School	90.2	High Performance and High Growth
Tashua Elementary School	93.8	High Performance

Middlebrook Elementary School made the largest increase since the pre-pandemic accountability results. Under the direction of new principal Debra Ponte, the school moved from a score of 81.5 in 2018-19 to 91.2 in 2021-22. “We are one of the few districts that went back to normal,” she said. We knew that we needed to be open for business and make school feel like school again. We kept the focus on our students. Middlebrook was proud to meet children where they are. We collected the data and used techniques to be sure to address any gaps.”

Principal Gary Kunschaf of Daniels Farm Elementary School noted, “We could not have achieved these results without the quality of classroom instruction which is supported by our literacy consultants and math specialists. Both collectively and in all elementary schools, it has been instrumental. While we don’t have deep layers of support at the elementary schools, it is important to *keep what we have*.” His emphasis on “keep what we have,” as the federal dollars used to reinstate positions that had been cut during the 2019-2020 budget deficit will conclude at the end of the 23-24 school year.

“With the support of our Board, we strategically used our Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) and American Rescue Plan (ARP) grant funds to analyze data and rebuild the supports we know have historically worked in Trumbull,” stated Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Susan Iwanicki. “Our teachers, school leaders, and exceptional staff used the resources provided and worked collectively with families to produce impressive results despite obstacles that have held back other schools and districts both locally and nationally.”

Principal Jennifer Neumeyer echoed these sentiments. “While not unique to just Tashua, we came back from the pandemic to look at children as a whole—we collaboratively looked at typical developmental benchmarks with teachers and parents to try to identify struggling areas of need and put plans in place to target individual areas of growth.”

Principal Neumeyer, as well as other elementary principals, highlighted the effects of strong parent-to-school relationships as the glue that helped to solidify this past year’s success. “We always view parents as partners in the learning process,” she said. Jane Ryan Principal, Patsy Horan added, “Parents were also wonderful in supporting student learning more than ever before. It allowed us to come out of the pandemic and get back to the traditional instruction we have always had in Trumbull while also being sure to make learning fun and meet our students where they are.”

Secondary Schools in the Top as Well

Trumbull middle schools, Hillcrest and Madison also ranked in the Top 25 middle schools with Hillcrest ranking 6th in the state and Madison at 25th. “Coming back from the pandemic, students learned that they really do need their teachers. They came back wanting to be here and ready to learn,” shared Madison Principal Peter Sullivan.

“The success of Hillcrest, and the school district,” added Hillcrest Principal Bryan Rickert, “are a result of a collective commitment to education from the students, families, and staff of Trumbull. The data analysis and intervention provided by our instructional leaders is exceptional, and is one of the many reasons that set us apart from other schools and towns. We are incredibly fortunate to have incredible partners in this endeavor, and we look forward to continuing to meet the needs of all students.”

Trumbull High School ranked 16th in the state. According to Trumbull High School Principal Marc Guarino, “We are truly pleased to have earned a place in the top 20 high schools in Connecticut. We have incredibly dedicated staff and these results show that for us, kids come first.”

When asked about her reaction to the results, Board Chair Lucinda Timpanelli shared, “In spite of the obstacles that we have overcome in the past two years, our Board has remained committed to maintaining the talent, resources, and the expertise to move the district forward in innovative ways that provide all students with opportunities to achieve their best. These results affirm that commitment.”
