



# Simsbury Public Schools

Students



Teachers

Parents



Community

## District Annual Report 2017-18

## Message from the Superintendent/BOE Chair

The Simsbury Public Schools cultivate the mind, body, and character of each student. We engage students with a meaningful and rigorous academic foundation so that they can contribute to a global society with integrity, compassion, and resilience.

—Simsbury Public Schools District Vision

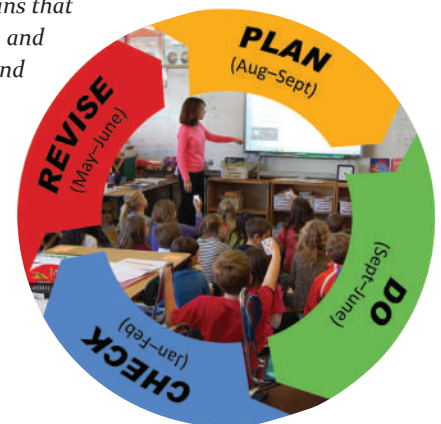


*Simsbury Public Schools has established high benchmarks for both teaching and learning. Each fall we look at the areas we identified for improvement during the previous cycle, assess how much we have progressed in those areas, and then take that data and synthesize it into this District Annual Report.*

*Our Board of Education (BOE) prioritizes goal setting as part of our continuous improvement planning cycle. This year we engaged in a process to develop a "Vision of a Graduate" ("VoG"). The VoG recognizes and defines the competencies required to be successful in a rapidly changing society that places a premium on skills such as collaboration, problem solving, and creativity. By identifying and prioritizing the competencies and skills necessary for our students, we will ensure that all our graduates will be prepared to contribute to a global society with integrity, empathy, and resilience.*

*One of the most exciting school improvements that we embarked on this year was the final phase of a renovation project at HJMS. The \$24 million capital project means that by the time our elementary school students become seventh graders, their middle school will welcome them with a secure facility equipped with renovated instructional spaces conducive to the needs of the modern middle school learner. We are grateful to Simsbury voters who approved these improvements for the safety and educational benefit of HJMS students. Many of HJMS's instructional spaces had not been updated since 1957. This renovation means that science classrooms will be updated, the library will be transformed into a modern learning commons, and building safety upgrades will be implemented. Finally, we are excited for the curtain to go up on a brand new auditorium not only for our world class music and performing arts program to utilize, but to be used as a shared space with the community.*

*Check out the amazing accomplishments by our students and the charts on these pages. Preceding each section is the Strategic Board Goal that gives us direction related to that area. These goals impact decisions we make relative to financial and human resources and drive the adjustments and refinements we make to our teaching practices at all grade levels. Our teachers develop their individual goals in alignment with school and district goals. If you have a question or concern about how your expectations are being met, please contact us or visit our website at [www.simsbury.k12.ct.us](http://www.simsbury.k12.ct.us). There is so much happening in our public schools, and we are proud to share our successes with you.*



Continuous Improvement  
Planning Cycle

District • School • Grade Level/Department

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tara Willerup'.

Tara Donohue Willerup  
Board of Education Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Matt Curtis'.

Matthew T. Curtis  
Superintendent

### 2017 Teacher of the Year Colleen Thompson

SHS music teacher **Colleen Thompson** was the 2017 Kathleen Magowan Simsbury Teacher of the Year. The program honors Kathleen Magowan, a Simsbury elementary school teacher for 35 years, who upon her passing at the age of 87 on August 17, 2011, left a generous bequest to the district. Thompson's professional work as a middle school and high school music educator is considered exemplary by her colleagues, but it is her support for students with special needs that puts her in a special category of teachers who truly change students' lives. She expects the "best self" from every student, with a primary responsibility being to provide their fellow students with any support they need to succeed.



### 2017-18 Board of Education

Tara Donohue Willerup, Chair  
R. Michael Goman, Vice Chair  
Todd Burrick, Secretary  
Lydia Tedone  
Susan Salina  
Thomas E. Frank  
Jeff Tindall  
Jennifer Batchelar

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? Email: [MCurtis@simsbury.k12.ct.us](mailto:MCurtis@simsbury.k12.ct.us) Website: [www.simsbury.k12.ct.us](http://www.simsbury.k12.ct.us)



# Highlights of Accomplishments 2017-18

## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

- SHS students “swept” the Student Design CT Home Builder’s competition, with 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th place award winners.
- 30% of Principles of Biomedical Science students scored in the “Advanced” band on the national final exam.
- SHS had 3 Gold Medal winners in the State Poetry Recitation Latin competition.
- Four HJMS students received a perfect score on the National Latin Exam; SHS had 30 award winners on the exam.
- 17 students won a silver or bronze medal for the National French Exam.
- Districtwide elementary students participated in Connecticut’s *Invention Convention*; 2 Central School students and 3 Tariffville School students qualified for the state level competition at UCONN.
- Districtwide elementary students participated in the *Math Olympiads*; a Tariffville School sixth grade student earned the top score with 24 out of 25 correct.
- Districtwide elementary students participated in the *National Geography Bee*; a Central School sixth grade student advanced to the state competition.

## ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS

- An SHS student was awarded the top prize from Avon Arts Association Scholarship.
- An SHS artist placed Best in Show in the “Space & Place” Inter-district Avon Old Farms Show.
- 2 ensembles from SHS were selected to perform at the State Music Educator’s Conference (CMEA).
- There were 16 Scholastic Art Award Winners (includes Portfolio Awards) at SHS.
- 7 Gold Keys, 5 Silver Keys, and 4 Honorable Mentions were bestowed on SHS students in the 2018 Connecticut Scholastic Art Awards.
- 8 HJMS students received Scholastic Art Awards--3 gold medals, 3 silver medals, and 2 honorable mentions; one student also achieved Best in Show for his sculpture.
- Many students participated in the annual Lion’s Peace Poster contest; the 1st place winner was made into a HJMS holiday card and went on to win the state competition and was entered in the national competition.
- 2 HJMS students were honored as Artsonia’s Artist of the Week.
- Over 80 students participated as cast and crew members in the HJMS musical blockbuster, *Beauty and the Beast Jr.*
- In the Fantastic Festivals competition, the HJMS band and orchestra won gold and the chorus won platinum.
- A 7th grader won 2nd place in the U-15 fiddle category at the regional CCE mid-Atlantic competition for traditional Irish music; the student did so well that she competed over the summer in Ireland, representing the CT Academy of Irish Music.
- Members of HJMS United Sound performed at CT SEPTO (Special Education Parent Teacher Organization) Day on Capitol Hill on March 14th.
- A Central School student’s art work was featured in the Connecticut Department of Public Health Radon Action Calendar.
- At Fantastic Festivals (Six Flags), the Squadron Line Sixth Grade Special Chorus won a Gold Designation as well as the prestigious Esprit de Corps Award, given to one group that best represents its school and community, displaying exemplary cooperation, support, and spirit.

## HONORS & RECOGNITIONS

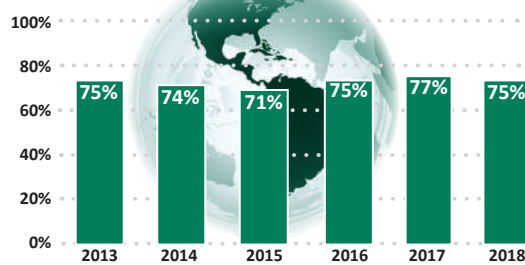
- Latimer Lane achieved status as a School of Distinction from the CT State Department of Education in all three categories: Highest Performing, Highest Growth for All Students, and Highest Growth for High Needs Students; Central School earned a School of Distinction award for the Highest Growth for High Needs Students category.
- SHS had 32 winners at the FBLA State Conference, with teacher Deb Manning named FBLA Advisor of the Year.
- A team of SHS students placed 5th in the Capitol Hill Stock Market Challenge.
- SHS students placed second in the New England Mathematics League for Hartford County.
- 1 SHS student won both regional and state History Day competitions earning the right to compete at the national level.
- 17 eighth grade female students participated in a “Girls in Engineering” program at SHS.
- An HJMS student participated in the state national Geography Bee at Central Connecticut State University and finished in the top third; one Latimer Lane sixth grader also competed at the state level.

## BUILDING CHARACTER AND SERVING THE COMMUNITY

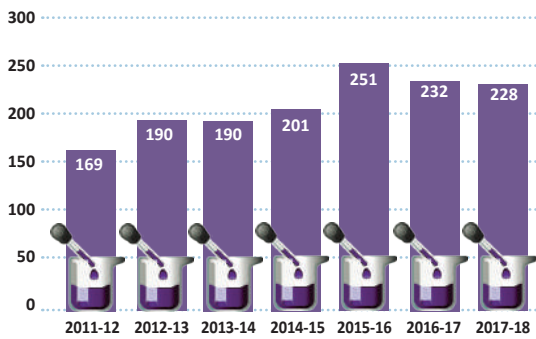
- 5 SHS students participated in the Best Buddies International Leadership Conference in Bloomington, Indiana.
- The French National Honor Society donated \$400 to Doctors Without Borders for the third year in a row, as well as sponsored the education of a student in Haiti.
- SHS’s acts of compassion included Wounded Vets Strong /Freedom Pen-a-thon raising \$6,119 to benefit Fisher House and the Holiday Cabaret performances raising \$8,358 to benefit Loaves and Fishes.
- SHS Connect classes collected 244 toys for children during the Simsbury Police Department’s annual Stuff a Cruiser event.
- HJMS participated in the annual Turkey Trot and collected \$1,000 from staff and students to purchase 48 turkeys for families in the community; canned goods were also collected for FoodShare.
- For cancer research, HJMS students participated in a Pajama Day and raised \$673.00, and two teams participated in the Relay for Life Cancer Walk and donated over \$600.
- Approximately 55 students participated in the HJ Leadership Academy, which prepares students to take leadership roles.
- Central School raised \$6,094.20 through the efforts of the Read-A-Thon in order to celebrate reading and support grade level charities of choice.
- Project Outreach at Tootin’ Hills School made 1,000+ sandwiches and collected canned goods for a Hartford homeless shelter.
- Fifth grade teachers at Tootin’ Hills School continued their program that fosters special relationships between 5th grade students and the residents of The McLean Home; this “Grand-Friend” program will continue in 2018-2019.
- Latimer Lane School participated in the Turkey Trot, gathering over 1,000 canned items for donation.
- Latimer Lane School raised \$1,200 on PJ Day to support the work at CCMC in combating childhood cancer as well as collected 15 boxes of clothing to support the Village family program.

# STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT All students will participate in a rigorous and engaging learning experience that balances academics with personal, social, civic, and physical development, enabling them to be successful.

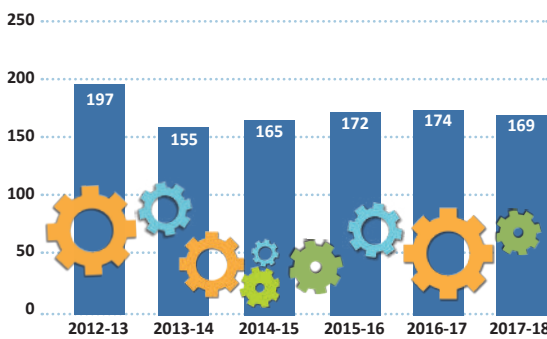
Percentage of SHS Students Completing at Least 3 Credits in World Language



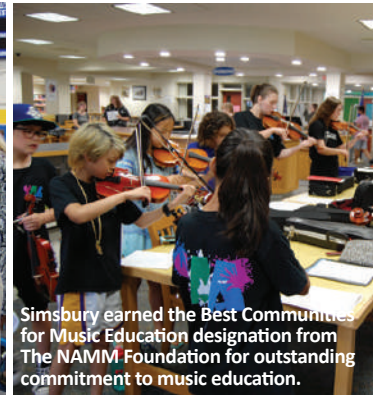
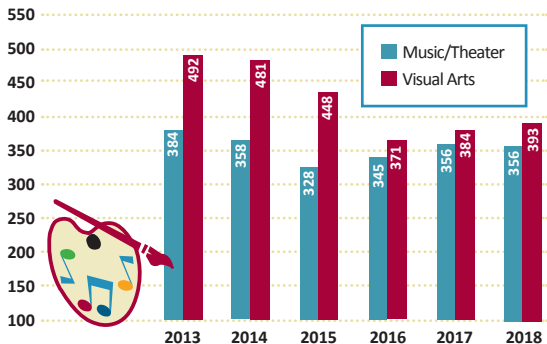
Number of SHS Students Enrolled in Biomedical Science Classes



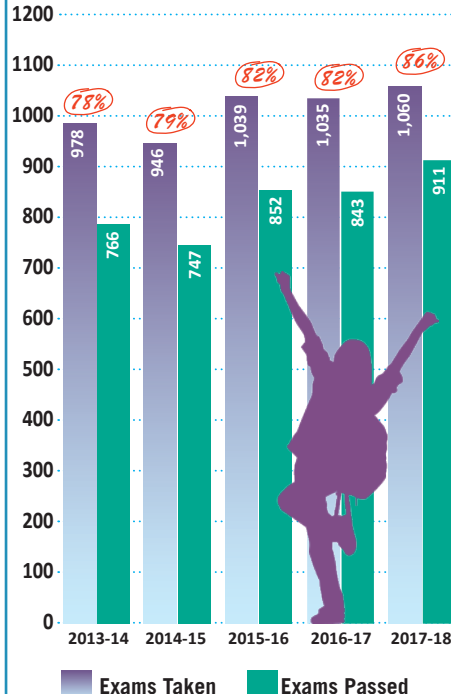
Number of SHS Students Enrolled in Engineering Classes



Number of SHS Students Enrolled in Visual Arts and Music/Theater Classes



AP Exams Taken vs. Exams Passed




## U.S. News & World Report Top 10 Best Public High Schools in Connecticut

- Ridgefield High School
- Greenwich High School
- Staples High School
- Darien High School
- Wilton High School
- Hall High School
- Conard High School
- Weston High School
- ★ **Simsbury High School**
- New Canaan High School

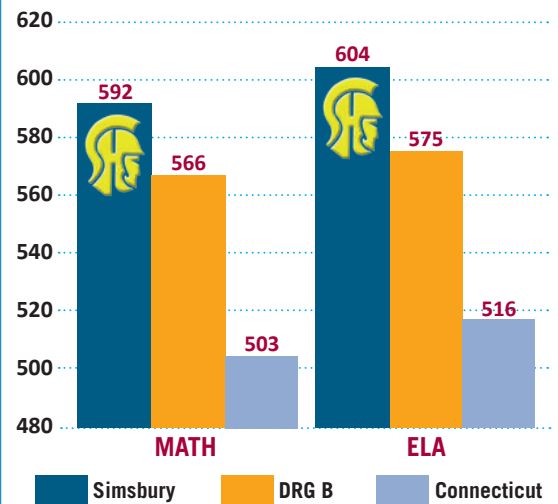


### 2018 DRG B High School Comparisons: CSDE Reporting

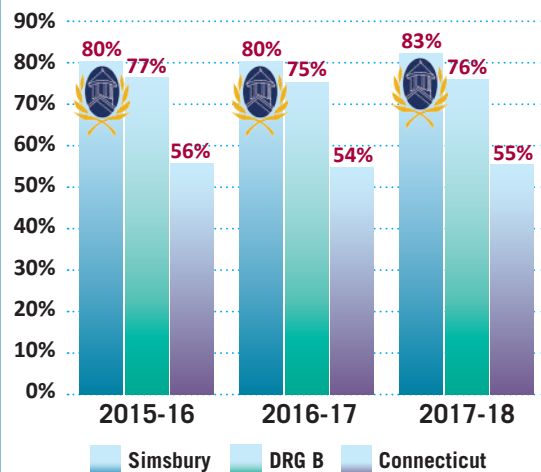
High School	SAT ELA: Grade 11	SAT Math: Grade 11	Combined
 Simsbury High School	604	592	1196
Avon High School	602	594	1196
Hall High School	598	583	1181
Greenwich High School	591	589	1180
Daniel Hand High School	593	582	1175
Fairfield Ludlowe High School	590	583	1173
Farmington High School	585	582	1167
Glastonbury High School	572	580	1152
Trumbull High School	565	566	1131
Masuk High School (Monroe)	573	557	1130
Pomperaug Reg. 15 High School	566	561	1127
Granby Memorial High School	561	549	1110
Cheshire High School	557	551	1108
Brookfield High School	557	545	1102
Conard High School	554	545	1099
Fairfield Warde High School	553	535	1088
South Windsor High School	547	536	1083
Amity Region 5 High School	n/a	n/a	n/a
Guilford High School	n/a	n/a	n/a
New Fairfield High School	n/a	n/a	n/a
Average Score in DRG B	573	565	1138
Statewide Average Score	516	503	1138

NOTE: District Reference Group (DRG) groupings are a comparison of school districts based on economic factors. The above are all towns in DRG B.

### 2018 CT SAT Test Day: Grade 11 Students



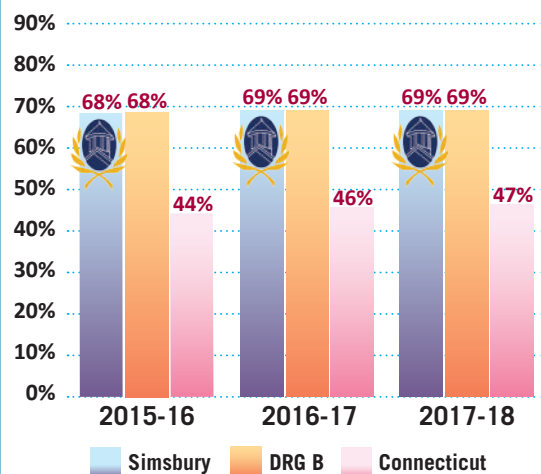
### Percentage of Simsbury Students Meeting Goal on SBAC ELA (Grades 3-8)



### Class of 2018 Advanced Placement Achievement

Year of Graduation	Percentage of SHS Students Completing at Least One AP Course	Percentage of SHS Students Achieving a Score of 3 or Above on AP Exam
2011	56%	79%
2012	60%	82%
2013	69%	80%
2014	73%	78%
2015	68%	79%
2016	69%	82%
2017	71%	82%
2018	76%	86%

### Percentage of Simsbury Students Meeting Goal on SBAC Math (Grades 3-8)



## PROFESSIONALISM All staff will contribute to a challenging, collaborative, and focused environment that fosters continuous improvement.

**Theory of Action on Teacher Collaboration** IF we cultivate collaborative communities of practice (Professional Learning Communities [PLCs], peer visitations, school-based rounds) that foster input from administrators and classroom teachers on issues related to instructional practice and student achievement, **THEN** we will create a shared vision and purpose for our work across all levels of teaching and learning within the district, leading to more effective practice and higher levels of student learning.

### Effective Teacher Indicator #6

Highly effective teaching in every classroom is supported by highly effective leaders in every school building. Our leaders support teachers so that they can facilitate learning experiences that are meaningful to students and prepare them for their futures. Our teachers work hard to support and encourage students to be engaged in inquiry-based learning opportunities that require the use of collaborative, creative, and critical thinking skills.

Each year our school leaders work collaboratively with their school leadership teams in identifying a leadership challenge; they engage the team in a rounds model of observation, debriefs, reflection, and commitments, which they follow up with by sharing learning/outcomes with a focus on improving teaching and learning. In addition, teachers participate in a Rounds process which is driven by their grade level/content PLC team in identifying a problem of practice; providing feedback through a cycle of observation, questions, learnings, and reflection; and making instructional commitments that positively impact teaching and student learning.

For over a dozen years, the teachers in Simsbury have had the structures and time to work collaboratively with colleagues to focus on using data to improve instructional practices in order to positively impact student learning outcomes. Each spring our teachers are surveyed to investigate the effect of their involvement in PLCs. The most recent data shows us that 100% indicated that working in their primary PLC has a greater positive effect on their instructional practice than working independently.

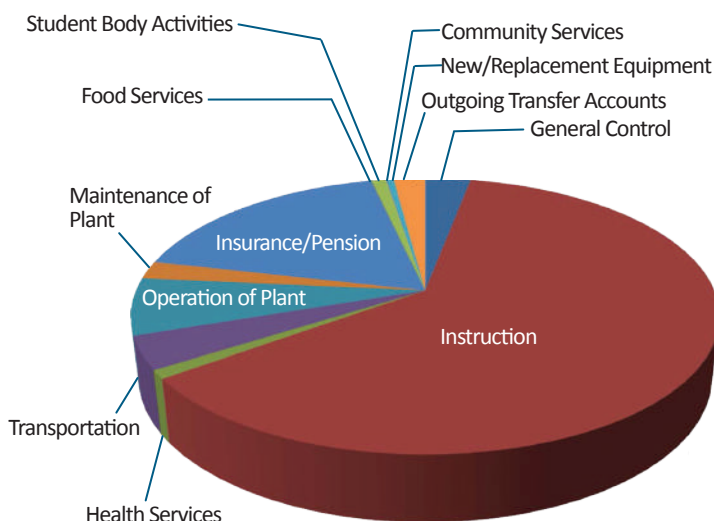
In Simsbury continuous improvement is at the heart of our collaborative efforts across the district. We believe that the practices embedded in the collaborative work of our Professional Learning Communities are what define the success and extent of their impact on the school and the organization as a whole. We recognize that through this collaborative commitment, we can strengthen leadership and teacher practices, thus positively impacting student achievement.



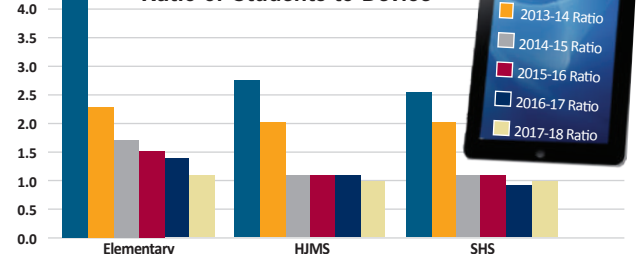
Each year, Simsbury Public Schools holds a day-long Technology Conference, which involves sharing effective uses of technology to enhance and transform teaching and student learning.

## RESOURCES All resources will be utilized efficiently and effectively towards the district's vision and goals.

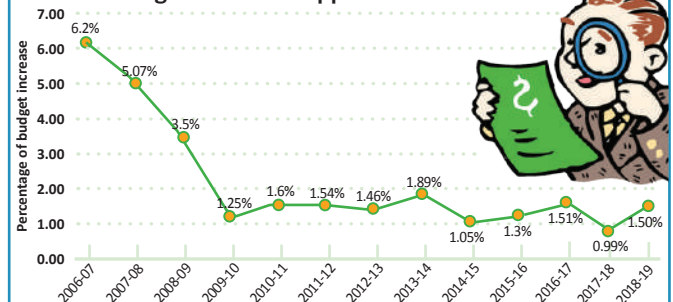
### 2017-18 Budget Expenditures (unaudited)



### Ready Access to Technology: Ratio of Students to Device



### Budget Increases Approved at Referendum





## COMMUNICATION The district will effectively communicate with stakeholders and engage them in the district's improvement efforts.

**Stakeholder Feedback** Every other spring, the Simsbury Public Schools conducts surveys with stakeholders to assess elements of school climate. In 2017 we partnered with Panorama Education for an extensive survey that included students, parents/guardians, and faculty members. In 2018 we conducted an in-house survey of students through the Google platform, in which we asked a similar set of questions in order to have comparative data. The results were by and large an affirmation of the quality of the school system and our positive school cultures.

Students answered questions on a 5-point Likert scale, with only answers in the top two categories being added together for a "favorability rating." Highlighted results from the student surveys are included here. Based on the 2017 survey results conducted through Panorama Education, we know that these results are strong when compared to other schools that administer similar surveys.

The physical and social/emotional safety of our schools remains a top priority. Principals in each of the schools are working with their Safe School Climate teams to analyze the data and to enhance school culture through our established character education programs.



In May 2017 the Trojan warrior bust dedication was held, the last step in a collaborative effort that began with an idea by SHS educator J. Clarke Bashelor, who passed away before his dream could be fully realized. Bashelor's colleagues, SHS students, and many members of the community picked up the reins and completed the journey in his honor. A plaque beneath the bust reads: "dedicated to all SHS Trojans past, present & future."



Each year SHS engages the community in the Freedom-Pen-a-Thon, which raises funds in memory of two alumni war veterans.

INDICATOR	ELEMENTARY STUDENTS	
	2017 Favorability (%)	2018 Favorability (%)
Overall, how much do you feel like you belong at your school?	72%	80%
How much respect do students at your school show you?	65%	74%
If a student is bullied at your school, how difficult is it for them to get help from an adult?	72%	78%
Overall, how safe do you feel at your school?	88%	84%

## SCHOOL CULTURE Simsbury Public Schools will provide a physically and emotionally safe and supportive environment.

### 2018 District-wide Discipline Data

91% of students did not require Tier 2\* behavior intervention

99% of students received school based recognition

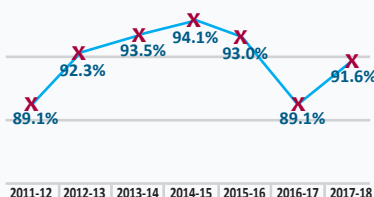


\*Tier 2 behavior intervention is defined by an action/consequence taken by administration and/or referral to the Student Intervention Team (SIT) process for behavior.

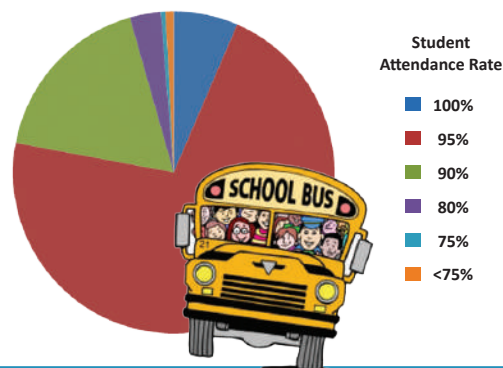


### SHS/HJMS Office Referrals

(% of students with 1 or less office referrals)



### 2017-18 District-wide Absenteeism



# District Vision for the Simsbury Public Schools

The Simsbury Public Schools cultivate the mind, body, and character of each student. We engage students with a meaningful and rigorous academic foundation so that they can contribute to a global society with integrity, compassion, and resilience.



## Core Beliefs

### We believe in...

- ★ Challenging expectations
- ★ High standards
- ★ Passion for lifelong learning
- ★ Academic and extracurricular experiences that emphasize intellectual, physical, artistic, and social/emotional well-being
- ★ Collaboration and communication among families and school personnel
- ★ Building relationships between staff, students, and community
- ★ Family and community partnerships
- ★ Continuous improvement and excellence