

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Hartford**

**TO:** State Board of Education

**FROM:** Mark O. Linabury, Chief  
Bureau of Choice Programs

**DATE:** June 4, 2014

**SUBJECT:** Approval of Charter School Enrollments

*Executive Summary*

**Introduction**

Today, there are 18 state charter schools in Connecticut serving more than 7,100 students. Three additional state charter schools and one local charter school will open during the 2014-15 school year. In accordance with Section 10-66bb(c) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.), the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) seeks the State Board of Education's (SBE) approval of charter school enrollments for the 2014-15 school year. Consistent with C.G.S. § 10-66bb(c) and past Department practice, the CSDE seeks, within the confines of the 2014-15 state budget enacted by the Connecticut General Assembly, to apportion available seats based upon the schools' capacity and demonstrated records of achievement.

**Background**

The CSDE seeks the SBE's approval of charter school enrollments on an annual basis. In August 2012, existing state charter schools submitted projected enrollment requests for 2014-15 to the CSDE, which the Department analyzed and used to inform its state budget request. On February 7, 2014, the CSDE asked each school to confirm its initial projections and submit an updated request for seats based on projected student enrollment for the 2014-15 school year. In accordance with statute, the CSDE considered each request in the context of the school's charter and record of student achievement.

This proposal entails a total of 8,183 seats in state charter schools and 63 seats in a local charter school in 2014-15. The 8,183 state charter seats represent an increase of 1,051 seats compared to 2013-14. 606 of the 1,051 new seats are for existing state charter schools, and 445 are for new state charters opening in 2014-15. (Please note that these figures are detailed in the attached table.) These totals are within the state budget's charter school appropriation of \$90,019,000 for the 2014-15 fiscal year, utilizing the statutory per-pupil rate for state charter schools of \$11,000 for 2014-15.

The local charter school, Elm City Montessori School (ECMS), will enroll 63 students from the City of New Haven and six students from suburban districts (through the Open Choice program) during the 2014-15 school year. The seat request for ECMS is within the state budget appropriation for local charter schools of \$900,000 for the 2014-15 fiscal year, using the appropriate statutory per-pupil rate for local charter schools of \$3,000. In accordance with C.G.S. § 10-266aa, New Haven Public Schools and ECMS have entered into an agreement to enroll 10 percent of ECMS' students from suburban districts through the Open Choice program.

## State Charter School Seat Proposals

Charter schools are listed below in three categories: (A) schools requesting waivers to increase enrollment; (B) schools not requesting enrollment waivers; and (C) charters approved to open in the 2014-15 school year. This information is also summarized in the attached table.

### A. Schools Requesting Waivers to Increase Enrollment

C.G.S. § 10-66bb(c)(1) places an enrollment cap on the number of students that a state charter school may enroll. The cap, however, may be waived pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-66bb(c)(2) for those schools that have a demonstrated record of achievement. Schools must apply to the CSDE for permission to expand enrollment beyond the statutory limit of 300 seats for schools authorized to serve Grades K-8, and 250 for all other grade levels. Applications were received from: (1) Achievement First Bridgeport; (2) Achievement First Hartford; (3) Amistad Academy; (4) Elm City College Preparatory School; (5) Highville Charter School; (6) Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication; (7) Jumoke Academy; (8) New Beginnings Family Academy; and (9) Park City Prep. CSDE staff reviewed the applications and records of achievement.

The CSDE considered a variety of factors when assessing each applicant's record of achievement and educational progress with students enrolled in their programs. Staff analyzed Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) assessment data for schools serving elementary and middle school grades, and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) for those schools serving students in Grade 10. This analysis included a review of overall achievement by content area, grade-level performance, performance by subgroup, and changes over time. The CSDE also reviewed School Performance Index (SPI) and District Performance Index (DPI) data relevant to each applicant; these composite index scores across grade levels and content areas (ranging from 0 to 100 points) allowed for an analysis of each applicant's performance over time and performance relative to its host district. The tables below show 3-year SPI trend data for each charter school seeking enrollment increases and the DPI for the respective host districts.

#### **1. Achievement First Bridgeport (host district: Bridgeport)**

Achievement First Bridgeport (AFB) has requested an increase of 126 seats to add new Grades 4 and 12, and expand enrollment in current grades. These grade levels were authorized by AFB's charter renewal application, approved by the SBE on June 6, 2012. The school has a strong record of student achievement and academic improvement:

Achievement First Bridgeport vs. Bridgeport host district

| Charter School/ Host District | SPI/DPI |         |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                               | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
| AFB CMT                       | 66.2    | 79.6    | 76.7    |
| Bridgeport CMT                | 53.6    | 55.5    | 53.7    |
| AFB CAPT                      | N/A     | N/A     | 77.6    |
| Bridgeport CAPT               | 40.7    | 40.5    | 38.4    |

Note: 2012-13 was the first year that AFB educated 10<sup>th</sup> graders.

Based on AFB's record of student achievement, the CSDE recommends granting an enrollment waiver to add 126 seats to the 2014-15 enrollment for a total of 963 seats.

#### **2. Achievement First Hartford (host district: Hartford)**

Achievement First Hartford (AFH) has requested an increase of 145 seats to expand enrollment in Grade 5, add a new Grade 11, and expand enrollment in current grades. AFH is currently authorized to serve Grades K-12. The Grade 5 expansion is part of a middle school growth plan for Grades 5-8 that was laid out in

AFH's charter renewal application, which was approved by the SBE on June 26, 2013. The expansion has also been endorsed by the Hartford Board of Education and is responsive to the public's demand for high-quality schools. The middle school expansion will operate under the AFH umbrella and be named Achievement First Summit Middle School. It will begin with Grade 5 in the 2014-15 school year and grow one grade per year for the subsequent three years. The school has a strong record of student achievement and academic improvement:

Achievement First Hartford vs. Hartford

| Charter School/ Host District | SPI/DPI |         |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                               | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
| AFH CMT                       | 72.9    | 78.2    | 76.9    |
| Hartford CMT                  | 56.2    | 58.4    | 58.1    |

The SBE's June 2013 renewal of AFH's charter also included specific requirements for AFH to report upon and improve its student discipline policies and outcomes. AFH submitted its required corrective action plan on August 9, 2013, which was approved by the CSDE on October 22, 2013. On January 30, 2014, AFH submitted its required update on discipline and suspension data, which noted successful efforts to reduce the number of student discipline violations. This report, which noted a 64% reduction in total suspensions (based on a year-to-date comparison between 2012-13 and 2013-14), was presented to the SBE's Accountability and Support Committee at its meeting on March 31, 2014.

Based on AFH's record of student achievement, as well as its progress to date with regard to student discipline, the CSDE recommends granting an enrollment waiver to add 145 seats to the 2014-15 enrollment for a total of 1,019 seats. In accordance with the approved corrective action plan, the CSDE will continue to monitor and verify AFHA's annual reports regarding student discipline violations.

**3. Amistad Academy (host district: New Haven)**

Amistad Academy (Amistad) has requested an increase of 44 seats to expand enrollment in current grades to meet the demand for high-quality schools. The school has a strong record of student achievement and academic improvement:

Amistad Academy vs. New Haven

| Charter School/ Host District | SPI/DPI |         |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                               | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
| Amistad CMT                   | 80.3    | 81.9    | 78.6    |
| New Haven CMT                 | 60.9    | 62.2    | 60.1    |
| Amistad CAPT                  | 80.4    | 78.3    | 81.1    |
| New Haven CAPT                | 53.1    | 52.1    | 53.3    |

Based on Amistad's record of student achievement, the CSDE recommends granting an enrollment waiver to add 44 seats to the 2014-15 enrollment for a total of 985 seats.

**4. Elm City College Preparatory School (host district: New Haven)**

Elm City College Preparatory School (ECCPS) has requested an increase of nine seats to expand enrollment in current grades to meet the demand for high-quality schools. The school has a strong record of student achievement and academic improvement:

Elm City Prep vs. New Haven

| Charter School/ Host District | SPI/DPI |         |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                               | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
| Elm City Prep CMT             | 76.1    | 78.5    | 79.0    |
| New Haven CMT                 | 60.9    | 62.2    | 60.1    |
| Elm City Prep CAPT            | N/A     | 79.4    | 73.2    |
| New Haven CAPT                | 53.1    | 52.1    | 53.3    |

Note: In 2010-11, Elm City had fewer than 20 CAPT test takers.

Based on ECCPS’s record of student achievement, the CSDE recommends granting an enrollment waiver to add nine seats to the 2014-15 enrollment for a total of 644 seats.

**5. Highville Charter School (host district: Hamden)**

Highville Charter School (Highville) has requested an increase of 20 seats to add a new Grade 10 to meet parental demand for a continuum of educational experience at the school. Highville was authorized to provide instruction in Grades PK-12 through its charter renewal application, approved by the SBE on February 6, 2014. The school has a strong record of student achievement and academic improvement:

Highville vs. Hamden and New Haven

| Charter School/ Host District | SPI/DPI |         |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                               | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
| Highville CMT                 | 72.3    | 77.0    | 77.2    |
| New Haven CMT                 | 60.9    | 62.2    | 60.1    |
| Hamden CMT                    | 74.8    | 75.5    | 75.5    |

Note: While Highville is located in Hamden, 36% of students reside in Hamden, 55% reside in New Haven, and 9% reside in area towns.

Based on Highville’s record of student performance, the CSDE recommends granting an enrollment waiver to add 20 seats to the 2014-15 enrollment for a total of 380 seats.

**6. Interdistrict School for Arts and Communications (host district: New London)**

Interdistrict School for Arts and Communications (ISAAC) has requested an increase of 16 seats to expand enrollment in current grades to meet the demand for high-quality schools. The school has a strong record of student achievement and academic improvement:

ISAAC vs. New London

| Charter School/ Host District | SPI/DPI |         |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                               | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
| ISAAC CMT                     | 72.3    | 65.0    | 70.0    |
| New London CMT                | 55.5    | 61.0    | 61.4    |

Based on ISAAC’s record of student achievement, the CSDE recommends granting an enrollment waiver to add 16 seats to the 2014-15 enrollment for a total of 262 seats.

**7. Jumoke Academy (host district: Hartford)**

Jumoke Academy (Jumoke) has requested an increase of 90 seats to add a new Grade 11, add a class to Grades 1 and 3, and expand enrollment in current grades. These grade levels were authorized by Jumoke’s charter renewal application, approved by the SBE on June 6, 2012. The school has a strong record of student achievement and academic improvement:

Jumoke Academy vs. Hartford

| Charter School/ Host District | SPI/DPI |         |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                               | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
| Jumoke Acad. CMT              | 81.9    | 83.4    | 80.1    |
| Hartford CMT                  | 56.2    | 58.4    | 58.1    |

Based on Jumoke’s record of student achievement, the CSDE recommends granting an enrollment waiver to add 90 seats to the 2014-15 enrollment for a total of 795 seats.

**8. New Beginnings Family Academy (host district: Bridgeport)**

New Beginnings Family Academy (NBFA) has requested an increase of 44 seats to add a new Grade Pre-K to meet the demand for high-quality schools. NBFA was authorized to provide Pre-K as part of its charter renewal application, approved by the SBE on June 2, 2010. The school has a strong record of student achievement and academic improvement:

New Beginnings Family Academy vs. Bridgeport

| Charter School/ Host District | SPI/DPI |         |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                               | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
| New Beginnings CMT            | 66.3    | 69.6    | 68.5    |
| Bridgeport CMT                | 53.6    | 55.5    | 53.7    |

Based on NBFA’s record of student achievement, the CSDE recommends granting an enrollment waiver to add 44 seats to the 2014-15 enrollment for a total of 444 seats.

**9. Park City Prep (host district: Bridgeport)**

Park City Prep has requested an increase of 96 seats to add a new Grade 5 to meet the demand by parents for a continuum of educational experience. Under its charter approved by the SBE on February 6, 2014, Park City is authorized to provide instruction in Grades 5-8. The school presented a strong record of student achievement and academic improvement.

Park City Prep vs. Bridgeport

| Charter School/ Host District | SPI/DPI |         |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                               | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
| Park City Prep CMT            | 73.1    | 74.4    | 72.9    |
| Bridgeport CMT                | 53.6    | 55.5    | 53.7    |

Based on Park City’s record of student achievement, the CSDE recommends granting an enrollment waiver to add 96 seats to the 2014-15 enrollment for a total of 356 seats.

B. Charters Not Requesting Enrollment Waivers

The following existing state charter schools are not requesting enrollments above the statutory caps established in C.G.S. § 10-66bb(c), and therefore are not requesting waivers for this provision for the 2014-15 school year: (1) Brass City; (2) Bridge Academy; (3) Common Ground; (4) Explorations; (5) Integrated Day; (6) Odyssey Community School; (7) Side by Side; (8) Stamford Academy; and (9) Trailblazers Academy. Brass City has requested an additional 34 seats to expand to Grade 2. Explorations has requested three extra seats. Bridge Academy, Common Ground, Integrated Day, Odyssey Community School, and Side by Side have not requested additional seats for the 2014-15 school year. Stamford Academy and Trailblazers have each requested additional seats. The CSDE has weighed all factors, including the records of achievement for each charter school requesting additional seats, in reaching its recommendation to approve the seat requests for Brass City and Explorations, and to award five seats to Stamford Academy.

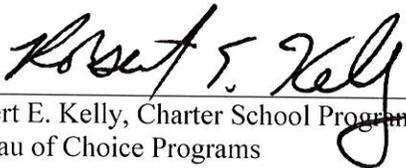
The CSDE recommends assigning Trailblazers the same number of seats in 2014-15 as it served in 2013-14. The school's request to expand to Grade 9 will be considered, if still requested by the school, as part of the charter renewal process.

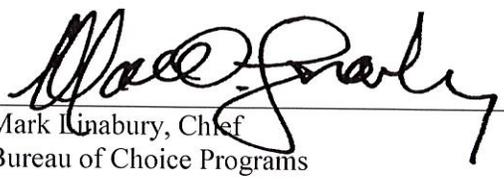
C. Charters Approved to Open in the 2014-15 School Year

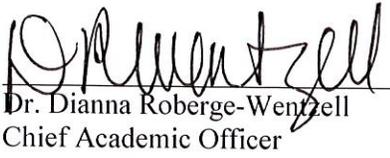
The CSDE recommends approving 120 seats for Path Academy (host district: Windham), 225 seats for Booker T. Washington (host district: New Haven), 100 seats for Great Oaks (host district: Bridgeport), and 63 seats for Elm City Montessori School, a local charter school opening in New Haven.

**Recommendation**

The CSDE recommends that the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-66bb(c) of the Connecticut General Statutes, approve the distribution of 8,183 seats in state charter schools and 63 seats in a local charter school for the 2014-15 school year, and grant enrollment waivers for 9 schools, as delineated in this report.

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**Table 1 - 2014-15 Charter School Enrollment Proposal Summary**

| <b>Charter School Name</b>                          | <b>2013-14 Grade Levels</b> | <b>2013-14 Eligible Enrollment</b> | <b>2014-15 Grades Proposed</b> | <b>2014-15 Enrollment Proposed</b> | <b>Enrollment Increase Proposed</b> |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| *Achievement First Bridgeport                       | K-3, 5-11                   | 837                                | 4,12                           | 963                                | 126                                 |
| *Achievement First Hartford                         | K-10                        | 874                                | 11                             | 1019                               | 145                                 |
| *Amistad Academy                                    | K-12                        | 941                                | None                           | 985                                | 44                                  |
| Brass City  | PK-1                        | 114                                | 2                              | 148                                | 34                                  |
| The Bridge Academy                                  | 7-12                        | 275                                | None                           | 275                                | 0                                   |
| Common Ground High School                           | 9-12                        | 180                                | None                           | 180                                | 0                                   |
| *Elm City College Preparatory School                | K-12                        | 635                                | None                           | 644                                | 9                                   |
| Explorations Charter School                         | 9-12                        | 83                                 | None                           | 86                                 | 3                                   |
| *Highville Charter School                           | PK-9                        | 360                                | 10                             | 380                                | 20                                  |
| Integrated Day Charter School                       | PK-8                        | 330                                | None                           | 330                                | 0                                   |
| *ISAAC  | 6-8                         | 246                                | None                           | 262                                | 16                                  |
| *Jumoke Academy                                     | PK-10                       | 705                                | 11                             | 795                                | 90                                  |
| *New Beginnings Family Academy                      | PK-8                        | 400                                | None                           | 444                                | 44                                  |
| Odyssey Community School                            | K-8                         | 324                                | None                           | 324                                | 0                                   |
| *Park City Prep                                     | 6-8                         | 260                                | 5                              | 356                                | 96                                  |
| Side by Side Community School                       | PK-8                        | 236                                | None                           | 236                                | 0                                   |
| Stamford Academy                                    | 9-12                        | 144                                | None                           | 149                                | 5                                   |
| Trailblazers Academy                                | 6-8                         | 188                                | None                           | 162                                | -26                                 |
| <b>Existing State Charters Schools</b>              |                             | <b>7,132</b>                       |                                | <b>7,738</b>                       | <b>606</b>                          |
| Path Academy  |                             |                                    | 9-12                           | 120                                | 120                                 |
| Great Oaks  |                             |                                    | 6                              | 100                                | 100                                 |
| Booker T. Washington                                |                             |                                    | PK-1                           | 225                                | 225                                 |
| <b>New State Charter Schools</b>                    |                             |                                    |                                | <b>445</b>                         | <b>445</b>                          |
| <b>Total State Charter Schools</b>                  |                             | <b>7,132</b>                       |                                | <b>8,183</b>                       | <b>1,051</b>                        |
| **Elm City Montessori School (Local Charter School) |                             |                                    | PK-K                           | 63                                 | 63                                  |

\* Enrollment waiver requested.

\*\* Elm City Montessori School will enroll 63 students from the City of New Haven through the local charter school program and 6 students from suburban districts through the Open Choice program.