

# **VI.D.**

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

### **TO BE PROPOSED:**

March 4, 2020

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of The Bridge Academy from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, subject to the Commissioner's March 4, 2020, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of \_\_\_\_\_, this fourth day of March, Two Thousand and Twenty.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Secretary  
State Board of Education

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford**

**TO:** State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Commissioner of Education  
**DATE:** March 4, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** Renewal of State Charter – The Bridge Academy, Bridgeport

**Executive Summary**

**Introduction**

In accordance with subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.), charters may be renewed, upon application, in accordance with the provisions for the granting of new charters. The State Board of Education (SBE) may renew a charter for a period of up to five years. The SBE makes renewal decisions based on evidence of the following performance standards:

1. *School Performance:* Is the school a successful model resulting in strong student outcomes and a positive school climate?
2. *Stewardship, Governance and Management:* Is the school financially and organizationally healthy and viable?
3. *Student Population:* Is the school promoting equity by effectively attracting, enrolling and retaining students, particularly among targeted populations?
4. *Legal Compliance:* Is the school acting in compliance with applicable laws and regulations?

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and the SBE carefully evaluate qualitative and quantitative evidence, and longitudinal data aligned to the four performance standards outlined above when making charter renewal decisions. The charter performance framework drives the CSDE's charter school accountability systems and processes, including initial approval decisions, annual monitoring and renewal determinations. From inception to renewal, charter schools must abide by the CSDE's charter school accountability procedures and performance framework. Charter monitoring takes place through annual reporting, meetings, correspondence and site visits, as appropriate. In accordance with C.G.S. § 10-66bb(g), a charter may be renewed upon application, if the charter school has demonstrated satisfactory performance relative to the four performance standards.

## **History/Background**

The Bridge Academy (The Bridge) opened in the fall of 1997, and is currently in its twenty-third year in operation. The latest CSDE audited student enrollment data from 2018-19 reported 281 students in Grades 7-12 with 99.6 percent residing in Bridgeport (the host district). The Bridge has a maximum approved student enrollment of 280 seats. Table 1, on page 13, of the attached Charter Renewal Report provides 2018-19 student enrollment and demographic data. Seventy-one point five percent of The Bridge students qualify for free or reduced price meals and 19.6 percent of the students receive special education services. The mission of The Bridge states, in part, “to provide a small, caring, public charter school with a rigorous learning environment. All members of The Bridge community strive to listen and communicate with each other, respond to diverse needs and give consistent effort necessary for personal and academic growth.”

## **Charter Renewal Process**

*Application for Renewal of Charter:* The CSDE accepted an application for the renewal of The Bridge’s charter on September 6, 2019. The application detailed the charter school’s progress, operations, and achievement in relation to the CSDE’s charter school performance standards: (a) school performance; (b) stewardship, governance and management; (c) student population; and (d) legal compliance. The Bridge submitted data and evidence to substantiate the charter school’s written responses.

A renewal team comprised of CSDE staff with expertise in curriculum, assessments, special education, English learners (ELs), school management, finance, and school governance reviewed the renewal application and requested clarification and additional information, where necessary.

*Renewal Site Visit:* On November 13, 2019, the CSDE renewal team conducted an on-site visit at The Bridge. The purpose of the on-site visit was to observe The Bridge’s programs, policies, practices, and procedures to assess their efficacy and fidelity to the school’s charter and aligned operating systems. Evidence was collected through the on-site visit observations, document reviews, interviews, and focus groups. The team spoke with board members, administrators, staff, parents, and community members. The team used this process to ensure that the school is functioning in compliance with the law and the school’s mission. The team verified the responses detailed in the renewal application regarding compliance with the law and the CSDE’s performance framework and accountability plan.

*Invitation for Written Comment:* The CSDE solicited written comments on the renewal of The Bridge from the Superintendent of Bridgeport Public Schools and from contiguous school districts: Fairfield, Stratford and Trumbull. The CSDE received a letter of support from Senator Dennis Bradley, 23<sup>rd</sup> District, Bridgeport and Stratford (see Attachment A). The CSDE received no letters against the renewal of the school’s charter.

Public Hearing: Robert J. Trefry, member of the SBE, and the CSDE staff held a public hearing on November 14, 2019, in the city of Bridgeport, and heard from individuals on the potential charter renewal of The Bridge and the impact it is having on the community. Public hearing participants included members of The Bridge community, including family members, students, school staff and community members. Over 45 people attended the public hearing. Twenty-four individuals offered testimony supporting the school's efforts and the renewal of the charter. No one spoke against the renewal of the school's charter.

### **Site Visit Findings:**

The most recent available data and information contained in the Charter Renewal Report (beginning on page 8), indicates The Bridge's performance according to the four performance standards. The report highlights school strengths and areas for continued growth.

### **Strengths include:**

- No significant findings, conditions, or internal weaknesses were uncovered in The Bridge's last certified financial audit.
- The school demonstrates strong community support as evidenced by testimony provided by individuals at the public hearing and interviews with parents during the site visit.
- The Bridge's website and Governing Board documents demonstrate that the Governing Board meetings are open and accessible to the public.
- The school has exceeded the state testing participation rate of 95 percent with 100 percent of all students and High Needs students tested in ELA and Mathematics over the last three testing periods.

### **Areas of Concern:**

- The Bridge's 2018-19 suspension rate of 10.0 percent, while trending downward from 19.3 percent in 2016-17, remains above the state average of 6.7 percent.
- The Bridge's 2018-19 school culture and climate data reports a chronic absenteeism rate of 17.8 percent, 7.4 percentage points above the state average of 10.4 percent and has trended up from the school's 2016-17 rate of 9.9 percent. The school's average daily attendance has dropped to 93.9 percent in 2018-19, from 94.6 percent in 2017-18 and remains below the CSDE's goal of 95 percent.
- According to the 2018-19 Next Generation Accountability Index, The Bridge's 4-year Graduation – All Students (2018 Cohort), rate of 78.0 percent is below the state average of 88.3 percent, and has declined from the (2017 Cohort) rate of 90.9 percent.
- The Bridge's 2018-19 Next Generation Accountability Index of 59.5 percent is below the state average of 74.2 percent and has declined from its 67.6 index score in 2017-18.

- The Bridge's 2018-19 Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) average scale score of 443 in ELA, (Table 4), is below the state average of 514 and the minimum College and Career Readiness Benchmark of 480. A scale score of 443 indicates that students are performing on average at Level 2, (420-470). The Bridge's scale score in 2018-19, shows no growth when compared to 2016-17.
- The Bridge's 2018-19 Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) average scale score in Mathematics, (Table 4) is 425, which is below the state average of 500 and substantially below the minimum College and Career Readiness Benchmark of 530. A scale score of 425 indicates that students are on average performing at the lower end of Level 2, (420-520). The Bridge's scale score in 2018-19 is 21 points lower than the scale score of 446 in 2016-17.
- The 2018-19 Smarter Balanced percentage of The Bridge students achieving at or above proficiency (level 3 and 4) in ELA for all students, (Table 4) is 32.6 percent, 5.2 percentage points above Bridgeport's 27.4 percent and 23.1 percentage points below the state's 55.7 percent.
- The 2018-19 Smarter Balanced percentage of The Bridge students achieving at or above proficiency (level 3 and 4) in Mathematics, (Table 4), is 12.8 percent, 2.9 percentage points below Bridgeport's 15.7 percent and is 35.3 percentage points below the state's 48.1 percent.
- The 2018-19 Smarter Balanced Assessment average percentage of growth target achieved of The Bridge students in ELA is 51.9 percent for all students, 1.5 percentage points below Bridgeport's 53.4 percent and 8.0 percentage points below the state's 59.9 percent.
- The 2018-19 Smarter Balanced Assessment average percentage of growth target achieved of The Bridge students in Mathematics is 54.5 percent for all students, 1.9 percentage points above Bridgeport's 52.6 percent and 8.0 percentage points below the state's 62.5 percent.
- The Bridge's renewal site visit revealed that all special education students regardless of the nature or severity of the disability receive all academic supports and specialized instruction in general education classes. There was no continuum of services noted (i.e. push-in or pull-out services). A continuum of services is required by the Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA) in order for students to receive their specialized instruction and related services in their Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) as stipulated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

## **Charter Renewal Recommendation**

On April 5, 2017, The Bridge received a three year charter renewal with probation. Conditions stated in the 2017 renewal, required The Bridge to develop corrective action plans to minimize behavioral incidents resulting in student suspensions and include measures to improve student academic achievement.

Since its last renewal on April 5, 2017, the CSDE Turnaround Office in collaboration with the Academic Office reviewed and evaluated The Bridge curricula documents in ELA and Mathematics for alignment to Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Areas of alignment and misalignment were identified for the school. An initial meeting took place in January 16, 2018, followed by emails and teleconferencing used to share the curriculum review findings and prepare the school to strengthen and align its ELA and Mathematics curricula.

A comparison of the school's SAT results from 2016-17 through 2018-19 in ELA shows no average scale score growth over the three year period. SAT results in Mathematics from 2016-17 through 2018-19 show a continued decline of 21 average scale score points over the three year period. The school's special education program does not meet the requirements of LRE pursuant to IDEA. Furthermore, the school's chronic absenteeism rate has increased 7.9 percentage points since 2016-17 to 17.8 percent in 2018-19.

Based on The Bridge's performance indicators, the CSDE recommends that the SBE renew the school's charter for a period of one year, with the knowledge that pursuant to subsection (h) of Sec.10-66bb(h), of the C.G.S., the Commissioner will place The Bridge Academy on probation, and require the charter school to file a corrective action plan within the statutorily prescribed timelines.

While the Commissioner recommends the renewal of The Bridge from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, the Commissioner's letter of probation, separate from this action, will include the following provisions:

1. By March 6, 2020, as required by C.G.S. § 10-66bb(h), the Commissioner shall provide written notice to The Bridge of the length and reasons for probation.
2. By March 6, 2020, as required by C.G.S. § 10-66bb(h), the Commissioner shall notify parents and guardians of students attending the school of the probationary status and the reasons for such status.
3. By April 3, 2020, The Bridge shall submit a plan for the CSDE to review and approve to minimize behavioral incidents resulting in suspensions and by adopting a restorative discipline model for the school including: (a) pre-teaching and re-teaching expected behaviors; (b) isolating the root causes of behavioral issues; (c) identifying interventions to target root causes; (d) strengthening school discipline policies and procedures; (e) monitoring interventions and applying midcourse corrections, as necessary; (f) establishing suspension targets to ensure dramatic improvement; and (g) formulating detailed plans to engage school stakeholders, particularly parents, teachers and administrators, in developing a corrective action. Additionally, The Bridge shall submit its year-to-date number of suspensions, and the concentration of students with one or more suspension to the CSDE at year-end, June 30, 2020, and on a bi-monthly basis beginning October 2020. The plan shall be developed in consultation with the CSDE's Turnaround Office. The Bridge shall implement the corrective actions within thirty days following the Commissioner's acceptance of the plan.

4. By April 3, 2020, The Bridge shall submit a corrective action plan acceptable to the Commissioner. The corrective action plan must target and address chronic absenteeism by: (a) isolating the root causes of chronic absenteeism; (b) identifying interventions to target root causes; and (c) monitoring interventions and applying midcourse corrections, as necessary. Additionally, The Bridge shall submit its year-to-date number of student chronic absenteeism to the CSDE at year-end, June 30, 2020, and on a bi-monthly basis beginning October 2020. The plan shall be developed in consultation with the CSDE's Turnaround Office. The Bridge shall implement the corrective actions within thirty days following the Commissioner's acceptance of the plan.
5. By April 3, 2020, The Bridge shall submit a corrective action plan acceptable to the Commissioner. The corrective action plan must include measures to improve student academic achievement. Additionally, The Bridge shall submit to the CSDE, on a monthly basis beginning October 2020, a report monitoring its year-to-date progress at improving student academic achievement. The plan shall be developed in consultation with the CSDE's Turnaround Office and the Bureau of Special Education. The Bridge shall implement the corrective actions within thirty days following the Commissioner's acceptance of the plan.
6. By April 3, 2020, The Bridge shall submit a corrective action plan acceptable to the Commissioner. The corrective action plan must bring the school's special education program into LRE, IDEA compliance.
7. The CSDE will, on a monthly basis, review and monitor The Bridge's year-to-date number of suspensions, chronic absenteeism and student achievement.
8. The CSDE will conduct announced and unannounced interim site visits to review and monitor year-to-date number of suspensions, chronic absenteeism and student achievement.
9. The Bridge must participate in relevant technical assistance organized by the CSDE.
10. In May 2021, pending State Board of Education notification, the Commissioner will evaluate The Bridge's satisfaction of the foregoing issues and determine the status of The Bridge's probation.

The CSDE will notify The Bridge of action taken by the SBE following its meeting on March 4, 2020. The school will be advised to take advantage of relevant technical assistance opportunities designed to improve its educational program. The CSDE will conduct follow-up visits to ensure The Bridge is addressing issues raised in this memorandum.

Prepared by: Robert E. Kelly, Charter School Program Manager  
Turnaround Office

Reviewed by: Lisa Lamenzo, Bureau Chief  
Turnaround Office

Approved by: Desi D. Nesmith, Deputy Commissioner  
of Academics and Innovation

## CHARTER RENEWAL REPORT | 2020

Charter School Information:		
Charter School Name:	The Bridge Academy	
School Director:	Timothy Dutton	
School Board Chairperson:	Celeste Markle	
Location (City/Town):	Bridgeport	
Rating Key:		
<b>Meets</b>	The school demonstrates effective policies and practices, resulting in positive outcomes.	
<b>Pending Action</b>	The school requires minor modifications to its policies and/or practices. The school is taking satisfactory measures to remedy and address these issues in a timely manner.	
<b>Does Not Meet</b>	The schools falls below performance expectations with significant concerns noted, which require immediate attention and intervention.	
Standard 1: School Performance Indicators	Points/Max	% Points Earned
Accountability Index:	803.8/1350	59.5
Notes and Evidence:		
<p>The Bridge’s 2018-19 Accountability Index of 59.5, is below average when compared to the state school Accountability Index of 74.2. Schools that meet <b>Standard 1:</b> are schools earning an accountability index from 85 to 100 (<b>Category 1</b>), schools earning an accountability index from 70 to 84.9, (<b>Category 2</b>) and schools earning an accountability index of 69.9 or lower and have not been identified as a Turnaround or Focus School (<b>Category 3</b>). The Bridge’s Accountability Index score of 59.5 places its performance in Category 3, <b>which earns a Pending Action for Standard 1.</b> The Bridge’s 2018-19 Next Generation Accountability Report shown in detail on the next page.</p>		



Next Generation Accountability, 2018-19  
The Bridge Academy (Grades: 7-12 )  
School Category: 3

Indicator	Index/Rate	Target	Points Earned	Max Points	% Points Earned	State Average % Points Earned
1a. ELA Performance Index - All Students	53.1	75	35.4	50	70.8	90.2
1b. ELA Performance Index - High Needs Students	51.5	75	34.3	50	68.6	77.5
1c. Math Performance Index - All Students	44.2	75	29.5	50	59.0	84.1
1d. Math Performance Index - High Needs Students	43.5	75	29.0	50	58.1	70.2
1e. Science Performance Index - All Students	47.6	75	31.7	50	63.4	85.0
1f. Science Performance Index - High Needs Students	46.7	75	31.1	50	62.3	72.2
2a. ELA Academic Growth - All Students	51.9%	100%	51.9	100	51.9	59.9
2b. ELA Academic Growth - High Needs Students	49.8%	100%	49.8	100	49.8	55.1
2c. Math Academic Growth - All Students	54.5%	100%	54.5	100	54.5	62.5
2d. Math Academic Growth - High Needs Students	55.5%	100%	55.5	100	55.5	55.2
2e. Progress Toward English Proficiency - Literacy	.	100%	.	.	.	60.0
2f. Progress Toward English Proficiency - Oral	.	100%	.	.	.	52.1
4a. Chronic Absenteeism - All Students	17.8%	<=5%	24.3	50	48.7	78.3
4b. Chronic Absenteeism - High Needs Students	19.1%	<=5%	21.9	50	43.7	55.7
5. Preparation for CCR - Percent Taking Courses	5.8%	75%	3.9	50	7.7	100.0
6. Preparation for CCR - Percent Passing Exams	5.8%	75%	3.9	50	7.7	56.7
7. On-track to High School Graduation	87.9%	94%	46.7	50	93.5	93.6
8. 4-year Graduation: All Students (2018 Cohort)	78.0%	94%	83.0	100	83.0	93.9
9. 6-year Graduation: High Needs Students (2016 Cohort)	87.1%	94%	92.7	100	92.7	88.6
10. Postsecondary Entrance (Graduating Class 2018)	80.0%	75%	100.0	100	100.0	94.5
11. Physical Fitness (estimated participation rate = 100.0%)	34.1%	75%	22.7	50	45.4	70.6
12. Arts Access	2.4%	60%	2.0	50	4.1	86.5
Accountability Index	.	.	803.8	1350	59.5	74.2

Gap Indicators

Indicator	Non-High Needs Rate	High Needs Rate	Size of Gap	State Gap Mean +1 Standard Deviation	Is Gap an Outlier?
ELA Performance Index Gap	60.0	51.5	8.6	15.3	N
Math Performance Index Gap	47.1	43.5	3.6	17.4	N
Science Performance Index Gap	.	46.7	.	16.3	
Graduation Rate Gap (2016 Cohort)	.	87.1	.	8.0	

If the Non-High Needs Rate exceeds the ultimate target (75 for Performance Index and 94% for Graduation Rate), the ultimate target is used for gap calculations.  
If the size of the gap exceeds the state mean gap plus one standard deviation, the gap is an outlier.

Assessment Participation Rates

Indicator	Participation Rate (%)
ELA - All Students	100.0
ELA - High Needs Students	100.0
Math - All Students	100.0
Math - High Needs Students	100.0
Science - All Students	100.0
Science - High Needs Students	100.0

Minimum participation standard is 95%.

Standard 2: Stewardship, Governance and Management Indicators:	Rating
2.1. Fiscal Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
2.2. Financial Reporting and Compliance	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
2.3. Financial Viability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
2.4. Governance and Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
2.5. School Facility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
<b>Notes and Evidence:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Indicator 2.1:</b> The CSDE site visit staff reviewed The Bridge’s last certified financial audit and uncovered no significant findings, conditions or internal control weakness.</li> <li>• <b>Indicator 2.2:</b> The CSDE site visit staff reviewed The Bridge’s last certified financial audit, Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual (APPM), Board Policies and Procedures Manual (BPPM) and budgets, and interviewed the school principals, Director of Operations and Governing Board members. Staff from the CSDE’s Office of Internal Audit determined the APPM contains the standard sections of an APPM. However, the APPM requires some minor amendments in the area of bidding for certain purchases. Staff from the CSDE’s Office of Internal Audit determined the BPPM contains the standard sections of a BPPM. The Bridge Board of Directors and its Finance and Audit Committee have specific roles and responsibilities for financial oversight of the school. The reviewers determined The Bridge completed on-time submission of certified audits and annual budgets. The school is in the process of amending the APPM.</li> <li>• <b>Indicator 2.3:</b> Staff from the CSDE’s Office of Internal Audit reviewed The Bridge’s latest certified financial audit and determined The Bridge’s debt to asset ratio (total liabilities/total assets), total margin (net income/revenue), current asset ratio (current assets / current liabilities), and debt service coverage ratio (net income + depreciation + interest expense) / (principal + interest payments) meets or exceeds the ranges recommended by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), signifying overall financial health.</li> <li>• <b>Indicator 2.4:</b> A review of The Bridge’s school policies regarding anti-nepotism and conflict of interest were found to be in compliance with the CSDE administrative oversight guidelines. The Bridge’s policies and procedures regarding background checks of staff and board members, open board meetings and board membership training were reviewed and found to comply with state and federal laws, rules, and regulations. This finding is supported by a review of background checks, board training records, school’s website and Governing Board meeting minutes. A review of The Bridge’s Bylaws were found to be in compliance with state statute.</li> <li>• <b>Indicator 2.5:</b> As evidenced during the site visit, The Bridge has a safe and well-maintained school facilities to support teaching and learning. The facility has been approved by the Bridgeport Fire Marshal and Building Department. The school has proof of property insurance.</li> </ul>	

Standard 3: Student Population Indicators	Rating
3.1. Recruitment and Enrollment Process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
3.2. Waitlist and Enrollment Data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
3.3. Demographic Representation	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
3.4. Family and Community Support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
3.5. School Culture and Climate	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DNM

**Notes and Evidence:**

- Indicator 3.1:** The latest CSDE audited student enrollment data from 2018-19 reported 281 students in Grades 7-12 with 99.6 percent residing in Bridgeport (the host district). A review of the school’s student enrollment policy, and interviews with school staff, board members and parents determined all students are admitted through a blind lottery.
- Indicator 3.2:** A review of The Bridge’s waitlist information (Table 3, page 13) determined it maintains a waitlist of families beyond the available number of seats. In 2019-20, 230 students were on the waiting list. The waitlist included 34 students in 2018-19 and 213 students in 2017-18.
- Indicator 3.3:** A review of The Bridge’s 2018-19 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports 71.5 percent of The Bridge’s student population qualify for free and reduced-price meals. The Bridge has a special education population of 19.6 percent. The EL population is 2.9 percent compared to Bridgeport’s 17.7 percent. To better reflect the demographics of the surrounding community, the school must seek to enroll more students who are English learners.
- Indicator 3.4:** The Bridge demonstrates strong community support, as evidenced by parent interviews conducted by the CSDE renewal team. Parent focus groups were in support of the school and its staff. Parents expressed having strong relationships with teachers and perceived them to be committed to addressing the needs of their students. The school arranges for alumni to mentor students to assist with setting goals, establishing resources and developing contacts with the intent to motivate students to explore their own career paths.

Students testified during the public hearing that they are happy with the educational choice opportunity the school provides. Over 45 individuals attended the public hearing on November 14, 2019, and 24 individuals offered testimony supporting the school’s efforts and the renewal of its charter.

- Indicator 3.5:** The Bridge’s 2018-19 suspension rate of 10.0 percent, is above the states 6.7 percent, however, has trended downward from 19.3 percent in 2016-17. Average daily attendance has declined to 93.9 percent in 2018-19 from 94.6 percent in 2017-18, and remains below the CSDE’s goal of 95 percent. The school’s 2018-19 chronic absenteeism rate of 17.8 percent is 7.4 percentage points above the state’s average of 10.4 percent and has increased 7.9 percentage points from the school’s 2016-17 chronic absenteeism rate of 9.9 percent. The Bridge must refine efforts to improve student engagement and attendance.

Standard 4: Legal Compliance Indicators	Rating
4.1. Open Meetings/Information Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.2. Students with Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.3. English Learners	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.4. Rights of Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.5. Teacher/Staff Credentials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.6. Employee Rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
<b>Notes and Evidence:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>Indicator 4.1:</b> The school’s website and Governing Board documents demonstrate that Governing Board meetings are open and accessible to the public. The Governing Board meeting schedule for the year and meeting agendas are posted on the school’s website. Education records and testing data are secured in locked file cabinets in a secure room.</p> <p><b>Indicator 4.2:</b> A review of The Bridge’s 2018-19 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports the percentage of special education students at the school as 19.6 percent. The Bridge’s renewal site visit revealed that all special education students regardless of the nature or severity of the disability receive all academic supports and specialized instruction in general education classes. There was no continuum of services noted (i.e. push-in or pull-out services). A continuum of services is required by the Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA) in order for students to receive their specialized instruction and related services in their Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) as stipulated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).</p> <p>It is expected that the majority of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) can appropriately receive specialized instruction, modifications and accommodations in the general education environment. However, there are students who even with supports and services require specialized instruction outside of the general education classroom. The school must consider that LRE does not mean all students are in general education all of the time. The Bridge is in the process of developing a corrective action plan to meet the requirements of LRE.</p> <p>Paraeducator supports, physical therapy, speech and language and social and emotional therapies are provided to students as their IEPs require. The school is refining a related services verification log to verify when services are provided.</p> <p>Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings are conducted by the school district in which the student resides via telephone. This allows for stronger participation of the school’s staff. Parents/Guardians, students (as appropriate), and required PPT members from the host district and The Bridge are invited to participate in the meeting. The PPT develops, reviews, and revises the IEP based upon the student’s individualized needs.</p> <p>Student education files are kept in locked file cabinets in a secure room.</p> <p>The Bridge’s special education staff expressed an interest in technical assistance targeting specialized instructional practices for students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and specific learning disabilities. The school is in the process of arranging training sessions that focus on these areas with the State Bureau of Special Education, to be facilitated by the State Education Resource Center (SERC).</p> </li> </ul>	

- **Indicator 4.3:** A review of The Bridge’s 2018-19 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports the percentage of students identified as English Learners (ELs) at the school as 2.9 percent. The school has provided a plan for supporting ELs and their families. The school is commended for creating an English Learner policy and plan for working with ELs and for its plan to accept and utilize the Title III funds to which it is entitled to provide supplemental EL supports. Some adjustments must be made to the policies to reflect updated practices, such as the statewide identification procedures, Parent Notification Letter and the Exit Letter, as indicated on the CSDE website. The Bridge is in the process of making policy adjustments.
- **Indicator 4.4:** The Bridge’s student rights policies and procedures include admissions, handling of student information, due process protections and state nondiscrimination laws. Interviews with parents and staff at the school supported the proper implementation and use of the policies.
- **Indicator 4.5:** Staff from the CSDE Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification reviewed the state certified staff file and the school’s employee roster. A review of The Bridge’s staff file as of December 31, 2019, reports 100 percent of the staff is in compliance with certification.

The Bridge is in compliance with the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program.

The Bridge is in compliance with the Educator Evaluation and Support Plan (EESP).

- **Indicator 4.6:** A review of legal actions brought against The Bridge determined that no government agency alleged the violation of any law by the school, or undertaken any investigation of any violation of law by the school.

Prepared by:	Reviewed by:	Approved by:
Robert Kelly, Charter School Program Manager	Lisa Lamenzo, Turnaround Office, Bureau Chief	Desi D. Nesmith, Deputy Commissioner of Academics and Innovation

## THE BRIDGE ACADEMY DATA

**Table 1: 2018-19 Student Enrollment and Demographic Information (latest audited student data)**

Grades served:	<b>7-12</b>
Total enrollment:	<b>281</b>
Percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price meals:	<b>71.5</b>
Percentage of special education students:	<b>19.6</b>
Percentage of students with limited English proficiency:	<b>2.9</b>
Percentage American Indian or Alaska Native:	<b>*</b>
Percentage of Asian students:	<b>*</b>
Percentage of Black students:	<b>56.9</b>
Percentage of Hispanic students:	<b>40.2</b>
Percentage of Two or More Races:	<b>Not Reported</b>
Percentage of Caucasian students:	<b>*</b>

\*N<=5. Data suppressed to ensure student data privacy.

**Table 2: School Culture and Climate Data**

Performance Metric:	School 2016-17:	School 2017-18:	School 2018-19:	State 2018-19:
Average daily attendance rate:	<b>94.6%</b>	<b>94.6%</b>	<b>93.9%</b>	
Chronic absenteeism rate:	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>
Number of in-school suspensions:	<b>31</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	
Number of out-of-school suspensions:	<b>88</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>35</b>	
Suspension rate (% students with 1+ suspension):	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>
Number of expulsions:	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	
Cohort graduation rate (if applicable):	<b>90.9</b>	<b>78.0</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Six Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (if applicable):	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**Table 3: Student Waitlist and Mobility Information**

Performance Metric:	2017-18:	2018-19:	2019-20:
Waitlist number:	<b>213</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>230</b>
Number of enrolled students who left during the school year, or who did not re-enroll the next school year and did not complete the highest grade at the school:	<b>59</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>N/A</b>

## THE BRIDGE ACADEMY STATE TEST DATA

**Table 4:**  
Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) - Percentage of students at level 3 and 4 (met/exceeded)

	School 2016-17	School Average Score	School 2017-18	School Average Score	School 2018-19	School Average Score	District 2018-19	District Average Score	State 2018-19	State Average Score
ELA	28.9	443	*	462	34.3	443	30.1	435	61.6	514
MATH	*	446	*	438	*	425	12.6	413	40.6	500

**Grades 3-8**  
Smarter Balanced Assessment - Percentage of students at level 3 and 4 (met/exceeded)

	ELA					MATH				
GRADE	School 2016-17	School 2017-18	School 2018-19	District 2018-19	State 2018-19	School 2016-17	School 2017-18	School 2018-19	District 2018-19	State 2018-19
All Grades Combined	28.9	33.0	32.6	27.4	55.7	11.2	14.0	12.8	15.7	48.1
7	38.3	29.8	*	27.6	56.1	*	*	*	14.1	46.1
8	18.6	*	24.4	29.8	55.8	*	*	*	13.0	43.5

## The Bridge Academy Next Generation Science Standards Assessment Data

**Table 5: Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)**  
Assessment-Percentage of students at level 3 and 4 (met/exceeded)

GRADE	School 2018-19	District 2018-19	State 2018-19
All Grades Combined	14.8	20.3	51.2
8	*	20.1	52.2
11	*	17.1	47.7

\*The data are suppressed to ensure confidentiality.

Dear State Board of Education Members,

Below please find additional testimony submitted in support of the renewal for Achievement First Bridgeport and The Bridge Academy.

**Sen. Bradley Testimony in Support of Charter Renewals for  
The Bridge Academy and Achievement First Bridgeport Academy  
Thursday, November 14th, 2019**

Good evening, members of the State Board of Education and State Department of Education, it's a pleasure to be here with you this evening. I am Senator Dennis Bradley and I proudly represent Bridgeport and Stratford in the 23rd senatorial district. I'm here to support the charter renewals for the two Bridgeport schools before you this evening, The Bridge Academy and Achievement First Bridgeport Academy.

I am a Bridgeport resident, practicing attorney and former Bridgeport Board of Education chairperson. During this time, I saw firsthand the many challenges that we face, including a rising parent and family demand for great schools in our city. I hear from my constituents about their experiences and know that we need great educational options for our city. Too many kids are falling behind, not graduating, not prepared for the workforce and tomorrow's jobs, and we can no longer afford to accept the way things are if we have any hope of improving things for the better.

As I serve and represent the city of Bridgeport, I reflect on the importance of investing back into our great city, and we know that one of the most important investments that we can make for our city's future and our state's future is in education and investing back into our youth. I deeply believe in the power of our city and what it offers and can grow into, but that requires our state investing in what's working for our kids and families.

Bridge and AF are among schools in our city working hard to prepare the workforce of tomorrow, many of whom are low income and minority kids and who are often forgotten about and left behind. Both schools educate a combined 1300+ students, nearly 100% of whom are Black and Brown and more than 2/3rds are from low-income families. And when you look at their academic and overall results, it is clear that they are providing a quality option in a city that needs them, building the future leaders for their generation that we will need.

And that is why I'm here to support the renewal for Bridge and Achievement First Bridgeport Academy. I've had the pleasure of visiting Achievement First and can tell you from firsthand experience that the commitment to excellence for our young students is palpable in everything Achievement First does.

We are regularly reading in the news about people leaving our state and giving up on our cities like Bridgeport, and we simply cannot accept that. I joined the Senate because I know that we can do better and want to work towards that. Connecticut and our city have immense potential ahead if we do what's right for our families and kids, and that starts with great schools and options like Bridge and AF.

In short, we are a better Bridgeport for having these schools and ask you to support their renewal. Please renew these schools and let's continue to work together for the people of Bridgeport and for our great state.

Thank you for your time and consideration this evening.

Sincerely,

Senator Dennis Bradley  
23rd District, Bridgeport and Stratford

**Claudia Phillips**

Community Engagement Manager- Bridgeport CT

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