

V.C.

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO BE PROPOSED:

May 1, 2019

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of Achievement First Hartford Academy from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2022, subject to the Commissioner's May 1, 2019, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____, this first day of May, Two Thousand Nineteen.

Signed: _____
Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary
State Board of Education

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Interim Commissioner of Education

DATE: May 1, 2019

SUBJECT: Renewal of State Charter – Achievement First Hartford Academy, Hartford

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

Achievement First Hartford Academy opened in the fall of 2008. The student enrollment data from 2018-19 reports 1,112 students in Grades K-12 with 99.9 percent residing in Hartford (the host district). Table 1, on page 12, of the attached Charter Renewal Report provides 2018-19 student enrollment and demographic data. Seventy-seven point one percent of Achievement First Hartford Academy's students qualify for free or reduced price meals and 10.3 percent of the students receive special education services. The mission of Achievement First Hartford Academy is "to deliver on the promise of an equal educational opportunity for all of America's children regardless of race or economic status.

Charter Renewal Process

Application for Renewal of Charter: The CSDE accepted an application for the renewal of Achievement First Hartford Academy's charter on October 5, 2018. 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. Achievement First Hartford Academy 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, school management, finance, and school governance reviewed the renewal application and requested clarification and additional information, where necessary.

Renewal Site Visit: On December 5, 2018, the CSDE renewal team conducted an on-site visit at Achievement First Hartford Academy. The purpose of the on-site visit was to observe Achievement First Hartford Academy'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 Achievement First Hartford Academy from the Superintendent of Hartford Public Schools and from contiguous school districts: Bloomfield, East Hartford, Newington, South Windsor, West Hartford, Wethersfield and Windsor. The CSDE received no letters in response to the solicitation.

Public Hearing: Donald Harris, Jr., member of the SBE, and CSDE staff held a public hearing on November 1, 2018, in the city of Hartford, and heard from individuals on the potential charter renewal of Achievement First Hartford Academy and the impact it is having on the community. Public hearing participants included members of the Achievement First Hartford Academy community, including family members, students, school staff and community members. Over 85 people attended the public hearing. Thirty-four individuals offered testimony supporting the school's efforts and the renewal of the charter. No one spoke out against the renewal of the school's charter.

Site Visit Findings

The most recent available data and information contained in the Charter Renewal Report and the Next Generation Accountability Report 2017-18 (pages 6 and 7), indicates Achievement First Hartford Academy'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 Achievement First Hartford Academy's last three certified financial audits.
- 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.
- School website and Governing Board documents demonstrate that the Governing Board meetings are open and accessible to the public.
- Achievement First Hartford Academy's 2017-18 school culture and climate data reports a chronic absenteeism rate of 6.5 percent which is below the state rate of 10.7 percent, and average daily attendance rate of 95.7 percent which is above the CSDE's goal of 95 percent.
- The percentage of Achievement First Hartford Academy's high school graduates from 2017 enrollment in college of 80.0 percent, exceeds the state's 70.9 percent by 9.1 percentage points.
- The school has exceeded the state testing participation rate of 95 percent in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics and Science for all students and high needs students in each of the past three years.
- The 2017-18 Smarter Balanced average percentage of growth target achieved in ELA is 73.0 percent for all students, exceeding the state's 60.7 percent by 12.3 percentage points, and 73.0 percent for high-needs students exceeding the state's 55.6 percent by 17.4 percentage points.
- The 2017-18 Smarter Balanced average percentage of growth target achieved in mathematics is 76.3 percent for all students, exceeding the state's 61.9 percent by 14.4 percentage points, and 76.3 percent for high-needs students exceeding the state's 55.4 percent by 20.9 percentage points.
- The 2017-18 Smarter Balanced percentage of Achievement First Hartford Academy students achieving at or above proficiency (level 3 and 4) in ELA and mathematics for all students, (Table 4) exceeded Hartford, the host district and the state.
- The 2017-18 Smarter Balanced percentage of Achievement First Hartford Academy students achieving at or above proficiency (level 3 and 4) in ELA and mathematics for all students in Grades 3, 4 and 8, (Table 4) exceeded Hartford, the host district and the state.

Areas of Concern:

- Pursuant to Section 10-17e-j of the C.G.S., Achievement First Hartford Academy is required to provide a transitional bilingual program to eligible English Learners. Per the March 6, 2019 SBE meeting, Achievement First Hartford Academy was required to comply with the bilingual statute by April 3, 2019. The bilingual program was to include the following requirements: (a) staff certification; (b) EL identification; (c) serving EL students; (d) parent notification, communication and rights; (e) annual assessment and; (f) EL exit criteria. The plan was to be developed in consultation with CSDE's Turnaround Office. In order to comply with these requirements, Achievement First Hartford had several internal staff members take either or both of the assessments required for TESOL or bilingual endorsement. Two staff passed the required assessments, one for TESOL and one for bilingual. Given that these staff possess a Charter School Educator Permit rather than a teaching certification, we will accept this solution for the remaining portion of the 2018-19 school year. However, if the school is required to provide bilingual programming next year, the school will either have to hire a fully certified bilingual teacher or will have to request permission from the Commissioner to use a certified TESOL teacher in lieu of a bilingual teacher, should the school be unable to hire a person to serve in that role. In either case, the bilingual teacher or, if necessary, the TESOL teacher will have to be fully certified rather than holding a CSEP.
- It is the responsibility of the school to take steps to ensure that 100 percent of the staff holds appropriate authorizations for their positions. A report as of March 20, 2019, reports 85.1 percent of Achievement First Hartford Academy's staff to be in compliance with certification and current state legislation.
- Current legislation requires that at least 50 percent of educators serving in a charter school must hold a valid certificate (Initial, Provisional, or Professional Certificate) and the remaining 50 percent may hold other interim certificates, permits or authorizations. Of the 121 staff requiring certification, 57 or 47.1 percent hold a valid certificate, and 46 or 38.0 percent hold other permits or authorizations. Of the 18 staff out of compliance, some have applications for certification or permits pending, and have received letters indicating which credentials are missing in order for the application to be processed.
- While the school's suspension rate has trended down over the last three years from a high of 23.8 percent in 2015-16 to 12.1 percent 2017-18, it is 5.3 percentage points above the state average of 6.8 percent.

Charter Renewal Recommendation

Achievement First Hartford Academy is financially and organizationally stable. The average daily attendance rate exceeded the state goal of 95 percent, its chronic absenteeism rate is below the state average and suspension rates have trended down each of the last three years approaching the state average. Student data shows that the school is closing the achievement gap. The percentage of Achievement First Hartford Academy students achieving at or above proficiency on the 2017-18 Smarter Balanced Assessment in ELA and mathematics for all students exceeded the state. As mentioned above, certification is an area of concern. The school is out of compliance with appropriate certification authorizations. Acknowledging that Achievement First Hartford Academy's performance indicators are not without weakness, the CSDE recommends that the SBE renew the school's charter for a period of three years, subject to the following conditions:

1. By May 31, 2019, Achievement First Hartford Academy shall submit a plan for CSDE review and approval to bring its staff into certification compliance by October 31, 2019 by: (a) ensuring staff responsible for hiring clearly understand the certification requirements of each position; (b) providing a clear pathway and support to certification with established milestones and timelines; (c) including monitoring and interventions for non-compliance; and (d) reporting of non-compliant staff including certification targets, schedules, action steps, including responsible school staff, on June 28, 2019 and August 2, 2019 to ensure compliance. The plan shall be developed in consultation with CSDE's Talent Office. Achievement First Hartford Academy shall implement the corrective actions within thirty days following the Commissioner's acceptance of the plan.
2. By May 17, 2019, Hartford Public Schools (district of residence responsible for ensuring fidelity of implementation of IEPs) and Achievement First Hartford Academy will coordinate with the CSDE, Bureau of Special Education to develop a plan to ensure that the required supports and services documented in students' IEPs are being implemented and IEPs are compliant with applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations. Additionally, the Bureau of Special Education will work with Achievement First and Hartford Public Schools to develop a corrective action plan to address the site visit findings.

The CSDE will notify Achievement First Hartford Academy of action taken by the SBE following its meeting on May 1, 2019. The school will be advised of relevant technical assistance opportunities designed to improve its educational program. The CSDE will conduct follow-up visits to ensure Achievement First Hartford Academy is addressing the 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, Chief Turnaround Officer
Turnaround Office

CHARTER RENEWAL REPORT | 2019

| Charter School Information: | | |
|---|---|-----------------|
| Charter School Name: | Achievement First Hartford Academy | |
| School Principals: | Emily Banks (H.S.), Benjamin Cruse (M.S.), Raven Obas (Elem.) | |
| School Board Chairperson: | Barry Jacobson | |
| Location (City/Town): | Hartford | |
| Rating Key: | | |
| Meets | The school demonstrates effective policies and practices, resulting in positive outcomes. | |
| Pending Action | 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. | |
| Does Not Meet | 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: | 953.5/1250 | 76.3 |
| Notes and Evidence: | | |
| <p>The 2016-17 Achievement First Hartford Academy Accountability Index score of 76.3 is above average when compared to the state school Accountability Index score of 73.2. Schools that meet Standard 1: School Performance Indicators are schools earning an accountability index score that is in the state’s top three quartiles. Achievement First Hartford Academy’s accountability score of 76.3 places its performance in the second quartile, which meets Standard 1. Achievement First Hartford Academy’s 2016-17 Next Generation Accountability Report shown in detail on the next page.</p> | | |



Next Generation Accountability, 2017-18

Achievement First Hartford Academy Inc. District, Achievement First Hartford Academy Inc. (Grades: K-12)

School Category: 2

This school is identified as a School of Distinction based on High Growth (High Needs Students) - ELA & Math.

| Indicator | Index/Rate | Target | Points Earned | Max Points | % Points Earned | State Average % Points Earned |
|---|------------|--------|---------------|------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1a. ELA Performance Index - All Students | 68.5 | 75 | 45.7 | 50 | 91.3 | 90.1 |
| 1b. ELA Performance Index - High Needs Students | 68.5 | 75 | 45.7 | 50 | 91.3 | 76.7 |
| 1c. Math Performance Index - All Students | 63.8 | 75 | 42.6 | 50 | 85.1 | 83.6 |
| 1d. Math Performance Index - High Needs Students | 63.8 | 75 | 42.6 | 50 | 85.1 | 69.3 |
| 1e. Science Performance Index - All Students | . | 75 | . | . | . | . |
| 1f. Science Performance Index - High Needs Students | . | 75 | . | . | . | . |
| 2a. ELA Academic Growth - All Students | 73.0% | 100% | 73.0 | 100 | 73.0 | 60.7 |
| 2b. ELA Academic Growth - High Needs Students | 73.0% | 100% | 73.0 | 100 | 73.0 | 55.6 |
| 2c. Math Academic Growth - All Students | 76.3% | 100% | 76.3 | 100 | 76.3 | 61.9 |
| 2d. Math Academic Growth - High Needs Students | 76.3% | 100% | 76.3 | 100 | 76.3 | 55.4 |
| 4a. Chronic Absenteeism - All Students | 6.5% | ≤5% | 47.0 | 50 | 94.1 | 77.2 |
| 4b. Chronic Absenteeism - High Needs Students | 6.5% | ≤5% | 47.0 | 50 | 94.0 | 53.6 |
| 5. Preparation for CCR - Percent Taking Courses | 100.0% | 75% | 50.0 | 50 | 100.0 | 99.7 |
| 6. Preparation for CCR - Percent Passing Exams | 54.3% | 75% | 36.2 | 50 | 72.4 | 59.7 |
| 7. On-track to High School Graduation | 86.5% | 94% | 46.0 | 50 | 92.0 | 93.1 |
| 8. 4-year Graduation: All Students (2017 Cohort) | 90.3% | 94% | 96.1 | 100 | 96.1 | 93.5 |
| 9. 6-year Graduation: High Needs Students (2015 Cohort) | . | 94% | . | . | . | 87.0 |
| 10. Postsecondary Entrance (Graduating Class 2017) | 80.0% | 75% | 100.0 | 100 | 100.0 | 94.5 |
| 11. Physical Fitness (estimated participation rate = 48.3%) | 45.1% | 75% | 0.0 | 50 | 0.0 | 66.8 |
| 12. Arts Access | 45.5% | 60% | 37.9 | 50 | 75.9 | 85.3 |
| Accountability Index | . | . | 935.3 | 1150 | 81.3 | 74.9 |

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 | . | 68.5 | . | 15.6 | |
| Math Performance Index Gap | . | 63.8 | . | 17.7 | |
| Science Performance Index Gap | . | . | . | . | |
| Graduation Rate Gap (2015 Cohort) | . | . | . | . | |

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 | 99.9 |
| ELA - High Needs Students | 99.9 |
| Math - All Students | 99.6 |
| Math - High Needs Students | 99.6 |
| Science - All Students | 98.3 |
| Science - High Needs Students | 98.3 |

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 type="checkbox"/> M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM |
| 2.5. School Facility | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM |

Notes and Evidence:

- Indicator 2.1:** CSDE site visit staff reviewed Achievement First Hartford Academy’s last three certified financial audits and uncovered no significant findings, conditions or internal control weakness.
- Indicator 2.2:** CSDE site visit staff reviewed Achievement First Hartford Academy’s last three certified financial audits, Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual (APPM) 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 lacks standard sections of an APPM. The missing items include monthly credit card review by governing board, investment policy review by governing board, annual review of school policy by governing board, and principal evaluations. The reviewers determined Achievement First Hartford Academy completed on-time submission of certified audits and annual budgets. The school is in the process of amending the APPM.
- Indicator 2.3:** Staff from CSDE’s Office of Internal Audit reviewed Achievement First Hartford Academy’s last three certified financial audits and determined Achievement First Hartford Academy’s current asset ratio (current assets / current liabilities), cash flow (change in cash balance), and days of unrestricted cash (unrestricted cash / ((total expenditures – depreciation) / 365 days)) meets or exceeds the ranges recommended by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), signifying overall financial health.
- Indicator 2.4:** A review of Achievement First Hartford Academy’s Bylaws found a potential conflict of interest with board members that should be amended to comply with CSDE administrative oversight guidelines. The school is in the process of amending the conflict of interest policies. The Achievement First Hartford Academy’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 regulation. This finding is supported by a review of background checks, board training records, school’s website and governing board meeting minutes.
- Indicator 2.5:** As evidenced by the site visit, Achievement First Hartford Academy has a safe and well-maintained school facility to support teaching and learning. The facility has been approved by the Hartford Fire Marshal and Building Department. The school has proof of property insurance.

| 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM |

Notes and Evidence:

- **Indicator 3.1:** The 2018-19 CSDE audited student enrollment data reports 1,112 students in Grades K-12 with 99.9 percent residing in Hartford (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 Achievement First Hartford Academy’s waitlist information (Table 3, page 12) determined it maintains a waitlist of families beyond the available number of seats. In 2018-19, 170 students were on the waiting list. The waitlist has included more than 169 students each year for the past three years.
- **Indicator 3.3:** A review of Achievement First Hartford Academy’s 2018-19 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports students from minority groups represent 98.9 percent of Achievement First Hartford Academy’s student population and 77.1 percent of the students qualify for free and reduced-price meals. The percentage of special education students at Achievement First Hartford Academy is 10.3 percent. The EL population is 4.7 percent. The school must seek to enroll more EL students to better reflect the demographics of the surrounding community.
- **Indicator 3.4:** Achievement First Hartford Academy demonstrates strong community support as evidenced at the on-site visit by the CSDE during the parent interviews. Parent focus groups described the communication between the school and families as strong. All expressed support for what they perceive is a strong curriculum and the school’s dedication to ensuring each child’s needs are met. Parents indicated they were happy with the school’s commitment to serving students with diverse needs. Students testified during the public hearing that they are happy with the educational choice opportunity the school provides. Over 85 individuals attended the November 1, 2018, renewal public hearing, and 34 individuals offered testimony supporting the school’s efforts and the renewal of its charter. No one spoke out against the renewal of the school’s charter.
- **Indicator 3.5:** School culture and climate policies reviewed by CSDE site visit staff were clear and concise. Classroom observations revealed consistent implementation of behavior management model. A review of Achievement First Hartford Academy’s 2017-18 school culture and climate data reports a chronic absenteeism rate of 6.5 percent which is below the state rate of 10.7 percent, and an average daily attendance rate of 95.7 percent which is above the CSDE’s goal of 95 percent. While Achievement First Hartford Academy’s suspension rate is trending downward from 23.8 percent in 2015-16 to 12.1 percent in 2017-18, it remains 5.3 percentage points above the state average of 6.8 percent. It is important that the school continue its efforts to reduce student suspensions going forward.

| 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 type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DNM |
| 4.6. Employee Rights | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM |
| Notes and Evidence: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Indicator 4.1: The school 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 the school director’s office.</p> <p>Indicator 4.2: A review of Achievement First Hartford Academy 2018-19 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports the percentage of special education students at the school is 10.3 percent. To address student needs, Achievement First Hartford Academy employs 15 certified special education teachers which provide instruction and individualized services to identified students. The school contracts and employs staff for the provision of speech and language pathology and psychology. The school also employs four social workers who provide social services to students. Three special education directors were identified, which manage school wide academic interventions, conduct child find, manage the special services relationship with host district, monitor Individualized Education Plan (IEP) compliance, and track academic data and communicate progress to students, teachers and parents. Of the three special education directors identified on the day that special education was reviewed, two were properly certified for the position and one was not.</p> <p>Achievement First Hartford Academy provides a variety of models for providing instructional services including push-in, parallel teaching, co-teaching and small group instruction within the class. A review of 6 student Individualized Education Program (IEP) files indicate that the special education students are receiving specialized instruction, however, some students are not receiving related services as set forth in their IEPs. The following issues were identified in the review of student files:</p> <p>One student’s progress report showed a pattern of unsatisfactory progress across goals and objectives for the March 2018 reporting period. This lack of progress would typically lead to convening of the PPT and revision of the student’s IEP goals and objectives. However, there was no evidence that a PPT was convened to discuss any necessary diagnostic evaluations or necessary IEP revisions.</p> <p>Another student’s IEP listed the service implementer as a special education teacher. However, the teacher is not certified in special education, only in elementary education.</p> <p>The IEP and service logs of another student showed that the student was not receiving the required duration/frequency of related services as stipulated in the IEP. This is a violation of “Free and Appropriate Public Education” (FAPE) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). As required all service hours listed in the IEP must be met and documented in service logs to verify the provision of services by each service implementer. Missed hours during a given week/month must be provided and compensated for as soon as possible.</p> | |

- **Indicator 4.3:** A review of Achievement First Hartford Academy’s 2018-19 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports the percentage of students identified as English Learners (ELs) at the school is 4.7 percent. PSIS indicates that the school has more than 20 students that speak the same non-English native language (Spanish). Pursuant to Section 10-17e-j of the C.G.S., Achievement First Hartford Academy is required to provide a transitional bilingual program to eligible ELs. In order to comply with these requirements, Achievement First Hartford had several internal staff members take either or both of the assessments required for TESOL or bilingual endorsement. Two staff passed the required assessments, one for TESOL and one for bilingual. Given that these staff possess a Charter School Educator Permit rather than a teaching certification, we will accept this solution for the remaining portion of the 2018-19 school year. However, if the school is required to provide bilingual programming next year, the school will either have to hire a fully certified bilingual teacher or will have to request permission from the Commissioner to use a certified TESOL teacher in lieu of a bilingual teacher, should the school be unable to hire a person to serve in that role. In either case, the bilingual teacher or, if necessary, the TESOL teacher will have to be fully certified rather than holding a CSEP.
- **Indicator 4.4:** Achievement First Hartford Academy 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 report as of March 20, 2019, reports 85.1 percent of Achievement First Hartford Academy’s staff to be in compliance with certification and current state legislation. It is the responsibility of the school to take steps to ensure that 100 percent of the staff holds appropriate authorizations for their positions.

Current legislation requires that at least 50 percent of educators serving in a charter school must hold a valid certificate (Initial, Provisional, or Professional Certificate) and the remaining 50 percent may hold other interim certificates, permits or authorizations. Of the 121 staff requiring certification, 57 or 47.1 percent hold a valid certificate, and 46 or 38.0 percent hold other interim certificates, permits or authorizations. Of the 18 staff out of compliance, some have applications for certification or permits pending, and have received letters indicating which credentials are missing in order for the application to be processed.

Of the 50 percent allowed to serve under other interim certificates, permits or authorizations, legislation also allows for the issuance of a Charter School Educator Permit (CSEP) for no more than 30 percent of the educators serving in a charter school. Achievement First Hartford Academy currently has 32 or 26.4 percent holding a CSEP. Other options to bring staff into compliance for certification, pending they meet criteria for each option, include a Long-Term Substitute Certificate, a Durational Shortage Area permit (DSAP), a Temporary 90-Day Certificate, an Interim Educator Certificate or a Resident Educator Permit.

- **Indicator 4.6:** A review of Achievement First Hartford Academy employment policies and procedures and an interview with the school director determined the school’s hiring and employment practices ensure protections under the Family Medical Leave Act, Americans with Disabilities Act and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

| Prepared by: | Reviewed by: | Approved by: |
|---|---|---|
| Robert Kelly, Charter School Program Manager | Lisa Lamenzo, Turnaround Office Bureau Chief | Desi Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer |

ACHIEVEMENT FIRST HARTFORD ACADEMY SCHOOL DATA

| Table 1: 2018-19 Student Enrollment and Demographic Information | |
|--|-------|
| Grades served: | K-12 |
| Total enrollment: | 1,112 |
| Percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price meals: | 77.1 |
| Percentage of special education students: | 10.3 |
| Percentage of students with limited English proficiency: | 4.7 |
| Percentage of minority students: | 98.9 |
| Percentage American Indian or Alaska Native: | * |
| Percentage of Asian students: | * |
| Percentage of Black students: | 70.3 |
| Percentage of Hispanic students: | 27.3 |
| Percentage of Two or More Races: | 1.3 |
| Percentage of Caucasian students: | * |

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

| Table 2: School Culture and Climate Data | | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Performance Metric: | 2015-16: | 2016-17: | 2017-18: | STATE 2017-18: |
| Average daily attendance rate: | 95.6% | 96.0% | 95.7% | |
| Chronic absenteeism rate: | 10.1% | 9.1% | 6.5% | 10.7% |
| Number of in-school suspensions: | 1,225 | 1,352 | 247 | |
| Number of out-of-school suspensions: | 338 | 256 | 166 | |
| Suspension rate (% students with 1+ suspension): | 23.8% | 21.1% | 12.1% | 6.8% |
| Number of expulsions: | 11 | * | 7 | |
| Cohort graduation rate (if applicable): | N/A | 85.7% | 90.3% | N/A |
| Six Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (if applicable): | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

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

| Table 3: Student Waitlist and Mobility Information | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Performance Metric: | 2016-17: | 2017-18: | 2018-19: |
| Waitlist number: | 570 | 762 | 170 |
| Number of enrolled students who left during the school year: | 103 | 109 | 124 |
| Number of students who did not re-enroll the next year and had not completed the highest grade at the school: | 149 | 137 | 106 |

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

ACHIEVEMENT FIRST HARTFORD ACADEMY

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

| Grades 3-8 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | District-2017-18 | State-2017-18 |
|------------|---------|---------|------------------|---------------|
| ELA | 51.5 | 57.1 | 24.2 | 55.3 |
| MATH | 43.1 | 51.2 | 18.6 | 46.8 |

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

| GRADE | ELA 16-17 | ELA 17-18 | DISTRICT 17-18 | STATE 17-18 | GRADE | MATH 16-17 | MATH 17-18 | DISTRICT 17-18 | STATE 17-18 |
|-------|-----------|-----------|----------------|-------------|-------|------------|------------|----------------|-------------|
| 3 | 67.5 | 65.2 | 22.2 | 53.1 | 3 | 75.9 | 78.7 | 23.6 | 53.8 |
| 4 | 73.6 | 71.6 | 21.8 | 54.9 | 4 | 79.3 | 71.6 | 20.7 | 51.3 |
| 5 | 35.8 | 55.5 | 25.7 | 58.4 | 5 | 27.8 | 43.0 | 18.6 | 45.0 |
| 6 | 43.3 | 45.5 | 24.0 | 54.3 | 6 | 32.8 | 39.7 | 17.2 | 43.9 |
| 7 | 42.9 | 48.5 | 24.7 | 55.0 | 7 | 28.6 | 42.3 | 18.3 | 44.1 |
| 8 | 68.4 | 62.9 | 26.7 | 56.1 | 8 | 31.6 | 45.9 | 13.3 | 43.0 |

*Data suppressed to ensure student data privacy.

**Table 5:
Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) - Percentage of students at level 3 and 4 (met/exceeded)**

| | 2017-18 | Average Score | District-2017-18 | District Average Score | State 2017-18 | State Average Score |
|------|---------|---------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| ELA | * | 458 | 33.9 | 448 | 62.4 | 516 |
| MATH | 19.4 | 453 | 16.8 | 438 | 40.3 | 503 |

*Data suppressed to ensure student data privacy.