VII.F.

Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford

To Be Proposed:
January 15, 2025

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, accepts the Commissioner of Education's advisory and grants initial certificate of approval for a state charter to Taino CoLAB Academy, New Haven and Taino CoLAB Academy, Waterbury, subject to the conditions noted in the Commissioner of Education's January 15, 2025, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved, by a vote of _____ this fifteenth day of January, Two Thousand Twenty-Five.

Signed: _____
Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Secretary
State Board of Education

Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford

To: State Board of Education

From: Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of Education

Date: January 15, 2025

Subject: Consideration of Granting Initial Certificate for a State Charter to Taino CoLAB Academy, New Haven; and Taino CoLAB Academy, Waterbury

Executive Summary

Introduction

Section 10-66bb(f)(1) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) requires that an application for the establishment of a state charter school be submitted to the State Board of Education (SBE) for approval and be filed with the local or regional board of education in the school district in which the charter school is to be located. Upon such submission, Section 10-66(f)(1) provides that the SBE shall (i) review such application; (ii) hold a public hearing on such application in the school district in which such state charter school is to be located; (iii) solicit and review comments on the application from the local or regional board of education for the school district in which such charter school is to be located and from the local or regional boards of education for school districts that are contiguous to the district in which such school is to be located; and (iv) vote on a complete application not later than ninety days after the date of receipt of such application.

The SBE may approve an application and grant the initial certificate of approval for the charter by a majority vote of the membership. The SBE may also consider granting the initial certificate of approval for the charter based on the applicant meeting certain conditions that the Commissioner of Education has deemed necessary and may authorize the Commissioner to release the initial certificate of approval when the Commissioner determines such conditions are met.

Under Section 10-66bb(a)(1), if the SBE grants an initial certificate of approval for a charter, the SBE must submit to both the Education and Appropriations Committees of the General Assembly a copy of its approval documents and a summary of the comments made at the local public hearing held in accordance with Section 10-66bb(e)(2) concerning the proposed new charter school. Section 10-66bb(a)(2) provides that having received such submissions, the General Assembly may appropriate funds to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to provide operating grants to charter schools. If such funds are appropriated, an initial certificate of approval shall be deemed a charter, effective as of July 1st of the first fiscal year for which such funds are appropriated. Under Section 10-66bb(f)(1), such charter may be valid for a period of time of up to five years. Furthermore, Section 10-66bb(f)(1) provides that the SBE may allow the applicant to delay its opening for a period of time of up to one year in order for the applicant to fully prepare to provide appropriate instructional services.

Background

On April 9, 2024, the CSDE released a Request for Proposals for new state and local charter schools. Section 10-66bb(c) requires the SBE to annually consider applications for proposed charter schools located in towns that have one or more Commissioner's Network Schools or in a town designated as a low-achieving school district. The application for Taino CoLAB Academy (CoLAB – Waterbury), a proposed state charter school to be located in Waterbury, was received on November 1, 2024. The application for Taino CoLAB Academy (CoLAB – New Haven), a proposed state charter school to be located in New Haven, was received on November 5, 2024.

The stated purpose of the CoLAB charter schools is to create an educational environment for students in Grades 9-12 that prepares them for college and careers and empowers them to become impactful community leaders. The described mission of the charter schools is to unlock the ability for all students to be critical thinkers, social advocates, and digital leaders. The forward-looking curriculum, employed by the CoLAB charter schools, is designed to prepare students for the future workforce through the integration of courses in media and communication arts; business and entrepreneurship; AI, machine learning, and robotics; biotech and health sciences; and social impact and global changes. All curriculum will align with state and national standards, including the Common Core State Standards; Next Generation Science Standards; College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards; and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards.

The founders of the CoLAB charter schools have extensive experience in leading charter schools and engaging in meaningful partnerships. In addition, the charter schools will be in partnership with the Arizona State University (ASU) Preparatory Academy and its kindergarten (K) - Grade 12 school network, making CoLAB charter schools the first partner school on the East Coast. This partnership will provide CoLAB charter schools with membership in the ASU Preparatory Academy's K-12 Innovation Alliance, with support from the ASU faculty, and with access to ASU's expertise in developing models for college and career readiness. In addition, CoLAB charter schools are planning to partner with Leadership, Empowerment, Action, and Development (LEAD) to provide essential community-based and liaison services.

The CoLAB charter schools will start with a Grade 9 cohort of 100 students, adding one grade level each year until the charter schools reach a full enrollment of 400 students across Grades 9-12. CoLAB – New Haven proposes to open in September 2026 and CoLAB – Waterbury proposes to open in September 2027, both with the following growth plan:

Grade	**PreK**	**K**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	Total
Year 1											100				100
Year 2											100	100			200
Year 3											100	100	100		300
Year 4											100	100	100	100	400
Year 5											100	100	100	100	400

Section 10-66bb(c) of the C.G.S. directs the SBE to give preference to certain applications. CoLAB – New Haven and CoLAB – Waterbury seeks to be considered for the following statutory preference:

1. Opening the charter school in a Priority School District.

Taino CoLAB – New Haven and Taino CoLAB – Waterbury Charter Schools Application Review Process

Application Review: A team of external evaluators scored the applications for CoLAB Academy– New Haven and CoLAB Academy – Waterbury and CSDE staff reviewed the applications to confirm findings based on the rubric for the potential establishment of a state charter school in New Haven and Waterbury. The CoLAB – New Haven application scored 35.31 points (Attachment A) and the CoLAB – Waterbury application scored 34.56 points (Attachment B), out of a possible 46 points. Based on the summary rating, both applications meet the criteria needed to operate successful charter schools.

Public Hearing: Erin D. Benham, Vice Chair of the SBE, and CSDE staff presided over the public hearing on CoLAB – New Haven's application on December 18, 2024. The hearing was held in the City of New Haven, the district in which the proposed school is to be located. Over 35 people attended the public hearing. Twenty individuals, including parents, students, educators, and community representatives spoke at the hearing in New Haven, all of whom spoke in support of the application. No individuals spoke in opposition.

Kristen A. Record, member of the SBE and CSDE staff presided over the public hearing on CoLAB – Waterbury's application on December 18, 2024. The hearing was held in the City of Waterbury, the district in which the proposed school is to be located. Over 95 people attended the public hearing in Waterbury. Nineteen individuals, including parents, students, educators, nonprofit leaders, elected officials – specifically State Representative Geraldo Reyes, Waterbury and Alderman Ruben Rodriguez, Waterbury - and community representatives spoke in support of the application. No individuals spoke in opposition.

A second public hearing was held on January 7, 2025, for both applications. Dr. Seth Zimmerman, member of the SBE and CSDE staff presided over CoLAB – New Haven's public hearing in the City of New Haven. Forty-two people attended the public hearing. Thirty-two individuals, including the Alder for the City of New Haven, the President of the Dominican American Coalition of CT and members of the Latinos for Educational Advocacy and Diversity (LEAD), spoke in support of the application. No one spoke in opposition.

Allan B. Taylor, member of the SBE and CSDE staff presided over CoLAB – Waterbury's public hearing in Waterbury. Forty-six people attended the public hearing. Eighteen individuals, including the Vice President for Latinos for Educational Advocacy and Diversity (LEAD), the President of the Dominican American Community Center and members of the community spoke in support of the application. No one spoke in opposition.

Invitation for Written Comments: The CSDE solicited comments from the New Haven Board of Education and from the local and regional boards of education in towns contiguous to New Haven, which include East Haven, Hamden, North Haven, Orange, Woodbridge, and West Haven. A letter of comment was received from Woodbridge Public Schools Superintendent, Vonda J. Tencza. Superintendent Tencza stated that, "I know of no reason, nor can I provide any comments, which reflect poorly on the Taino CoLAB – New Haven (Attachment C). Letters of support were submitted by the City of New Haven community (Attachment D) and the City of Waterbury community (Attachment E). The CSDE received no letters opposing the Taino CoLAB – New Haven's application.

The CSDE also solicited comments from the Waterbury Board of Education and from the local and regional boards of education in towns contiguous to Waterbury, which include Wolcott, Cheshire, Regional School District 19, Naugatuck, Middlebury, Watertown, Thomaston, and Terryville. The CSDE received a letter of support from State Representatives Geraldo Reyes of Waterbury, 75th District; Juan Candelaria of New Haven, 95th District; Christopher Rosario of Bridgeport, 128th District; Minnie Gonzalez and Julio Concepción for Hartford, 3rd District, and 4th District, respectively; James Sánchez of Harford and West Hartford, 6th District; and Robert Sánchez and Manny Sánchez of New Britain, 25th District and 24th Districts, respectively (Attachment F). A letter of comment was received from Thomaston Public Schools Superintendent Francine Coss whose letter was in opposition to Taino Co-LAB Waterbury's application (Attachment G).

Recommendation with Conditions

I recommend the SBE consider the applications and grant initial certificates of approval for a state charter to Taino CoLAB – New Haven Charter School and Taino CoLAB – Waterbury Charter School, subject to the following conditions and with the understanding that if the General Assembly funds either or both the Taino CoLAB –New Haven Charter School and the Taino CoLAB – Waterbury Charter School pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-66bb(a)(2) the subsequent charter, or charters, may be valid for a period of three years:

1. Receipt of all completed documentation relating to facility requirements including safety, liability, and insurance certifications prior to the charter schools opening.

2. Receipt of all required and completed documentation relating to incorporation status and identification of governing board members prior to the charter schools opening.

3. SBE approval of a contract for whole school management services between Taino CoLAB Academy, New Haven and CoLAB Education, the charter school management organization, and Taino CoLAB Academy, Waterbury and CoLAB Education, the charter school management organization, prior to the charter schools opening, pursuant to C.G.S. Section 110-66tt.

4. SBE approval of a statutorily required contract between the Governing Council of Taino CoLAB Academy in New Haven, Taino CoLAB Academy in Waterbury, and the SBE that sets forth the roles, powers, responsibilities, and performance expectations of each party to the contract prior to the charter schools opening.

Prepared by: Felicia Canty, Charter School Liaison
Turnaround Office

Reviewed by: Melissa Jenkins, Ed.D.
Chief Turnaround Officer

Approved by: Charles E. Hewes, Ed.D.
Deputy Commissioner of Academics & Innovation

APPENDIX G: APPLICATION RUBRIC

Proposed Charter School Name: Taino CoLAB New Haven Date: 12/24/2024

Directions: Using the rubric below, please apply the Review Standards to score each section of the RFP on a scale of "0 – Does Not Meet" to "3 – Exceeds"; evaluate each of the sub-indicators to arrive at an overall "Total Score" for each section. The total score for each section should reflect an average of the scores for each of the sub-indicators outlined for that section. Enter the total score for each section on the final "Evaluation Summary" page.

Review Standards:	
DNM	**Does Not Meet:** The response lacks meaningful detail, demonstrates a lack of preparation, or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the applicant's understanding of the issues in concept and/or ability to meet the requirement in practice.
P	**Partially Meets:** The response lacks critical details in certain areas. The response requires additional information to be considered reasonably comprehensive and demonstrate a clear vision of how the school will operate.
M	**Meets:** The response indicates solid preparation and a grasp of the key issues, as demonstrated by a reasonable and comprehensive response. It addresses the review criteria with information showing preparation and a clear, realistic picture of how the school will operate. The response demonstrates the ability of the applicant to execute the vision described in the response.
E	**Exceeds:** The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. The response indicates thorough preparation, expertise, and a clear and compelling picture of how the school will operate. The response demonstrates the readiness of the applicant to successfully execute the vision described in the response.

I. School Vision and Design

1. Mission, Purpose and Specialized Focus **C.G.S. §§ 10-66bb(d)1,(7)**	**Total Score:** 2.40	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Describes the mission of the proposed school.				✓	
b. Defines the core purpose and key values of the school, specific to the school model, grade configuration and the total number of students it plans to enroll and serve.					✓
c. Explains how the school mission is consistent throughout the application and illustrates high academic standards for student success.				✓	
d. Presents a clear vision of the school. Identifies a specialized focus and ways in which the school will positively impact its stakeholders and community.					✓
e. Articulates how the school's vision aligns with the school's mission and how it will operate once it's opened.				✓	

Justifications:

(a) The proposed school's mission is well-defined, capturing a commitment to high academic standards and a dedication to student success.

(b) The 4D Quantum Learning Matrix is being piloted; the research supporting its usage is provided. Articulating its core purpose and key values, tailored to its specific school model, demonstrates thoughtful planning and intentionality. The school's consideration of Taino values shows deep cultural responsiveness.

(c) The proposal recognizes New Haven's need for additional high school options, especially in a district whose graduation rates lag the state average. It delineates how the core purpose of CoLAB (creating transformative educational experiences) is integrated into a comprehensive approach using the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix framework. The authors provide the research that bolsters the framework.

(d) The school's specialized focus on community leadership and economic agility demonstrates a commitment to positively contributing to the local community. The proposal has a detailed Portrait of a CoLAB Graduate which clearly shows both thoughtfulness and high expectations of all aspects of a student's postsecondary success.

(e) The clear explanation of the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix shows how Taino values will foster the preparation of students to be equity-minded trailblazers. The proposal discusses the real-world projects and community engagement activities the students will engage in, which will lead to the school's vision of students being impactful community leaders.

2. Educational Philosophy **Total Score:**	2.67	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Describes the founding group's core beliefs and values.					✓
b. Demonstrates the philosophy to embrace and serve the diverse needs of individual students.					✓
c. Provides an effective approach that is likely to improve students' academic performance.				✓	

Justifications:

(a) The founding group's core beliefs and values are inspiring and rooted in a commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment.
(b) Their philosophy of embracing and serving the diverse needs of individual students reflects a deep understanding of the importance of personalized education.
(c) By prioritizing tailored approaches recognizing each student's unique strengths and challenges, they demonstrate a thoughtful strategy to empower learners and enhance their academic performance.

3. Curriculum **C.G.S. 10-66bb(d)(5)** **Total Score:**	2.50	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Explains the process to access, identify or develop curriculum to be used by the school and provides criteria for the process.					✓
b. Applies appropriate legislation to evidence alignment to SBE approved standards and frameworks, the Connecticut Core Standards for English language arts, mathematics and the NGSS for science (i.e., scope and sequence, curriculum map, or lesson plan for course of study, etc.).				✓	
c. Provides evidence demonstrating that the curriculum is likely to improve students' academic performance. Is research-based information provided to support proof of high student achievement?				✓	
d. Demonstrates accessibility and appropriateness for students at all levels, including EL/ML, students with disabilities and other at-risk students.				✓	
e. Describes a clear plan for the ongoing development, improvement, and refinement of the curriculum.					✓
f. Describes a process for monitoring and evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of the curriculum.					✓

Justifications:

(a) The school's approach to curriculum development is thoughtful and comprehensive, demonstrating a clear and rigorous process. The indicators are clear, with aligned questions provided for each. The additional resources highlighted, including the C3 Framework and Hattie's Visible Learning research will foster rigorous academic expectations. The application also indicates that Understanding by Design will be used as a guiding protocol. UbD has a solid research base behind it. The process for identifying curriculum is detailed and rigorous.
(b) The alignment with relevant standards is supported with detailed evidence.
(c) The emphasis on research-based practices validates the curriculum's potential to drive high student achievement. Research citations are provided for each curricular resource.
(d) The accessibility and appropriateness of the curriculum for diverse student populations reflect a commitment to equity and inclusivity, although further attention is needed for students with disabilities and students identified as English Learners. The proposal's curricular resources each show consideration for students with different learning needs.
(e) The clear plan for ongoing development and refinement, coupled with a robust process for monitoring and evaluating effectiveness, ensures continuous improvement and lasting positive outcomes for students. The proposal details a "holistic approach to curriculum planning."
(f) The proposal has thoroughly detailed plans for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum. The comprehensive evaluation plan will collect many different data points through formative and summative evaluation. They will use multiple types of analyses in assessing data. The plan ensures that feedback will be collected and utilized from all stakeholders.

4. Instruction **Total Score:** **C.G.S. §§ 10-66bb(d) (5),(10)**	2.40	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Examples provided that describes the instructional methods or techniques that will be used to facilitate high-quality teaching and learning.				✓	
b. Demonstrates how instructional methods support high standards of achievement and are accessible and appropriate for all students.				✓	
c. Explains how the school will create a data-driven culture to meet a wide range of students using differentiated tiered instruction.					✓
d. Describes how the school will determine, support for staff and provide instructional professional development to ensure high quality instructional methods are delivered.				✓	
e. Describes the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and related monitoring of student progress and provision of tiered instruction.					✓

Justifications:

(a) The master schedule was provided instead of describing instructional methods, but some techniques, such as meditation breaks, were included. However, instructional methods are detailed.

(b) The techniques described promote accessibility and appropriateness for students, albeit needing further attention toward students with disabilities and students identified as English Learners. Some instructional methods listed are inquiry-based learning, design thinking, integrated literacy practices, AI-augmented learning, and using an agile ecosystem.

(c) The emphasis on creating a data-driven culture and implementing differentiated, tiered instruction demonstrates a proactive approach to meeting the diverse needs of learners. The components of the school's data-driven culture, including a systematic approach to data collection, ongoing teacher training specifically in data analysis and interpretation, collaborative data analysis, real-time feedback with AI-driven platforms, and personalized learning plans are listed. The proposal also indicates that their instruction will include Universal Design for Learning principles. The authors also explain their understanding of a tiered instructional framework.

(d) The school's plan regarding professional development ensures the delivery of effective instructional practices. The details for teacher professional development are also included, as well as a description of how new educators are paired up with mentors and includes teachers engaging "in action research projects to test and refine instructional strategies based on data-driven inquiries" The plan is very ambitious, and it is difficult to see how all components would be implemented adequately.

(e) The detailed description of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and its integration with monitoring student progress further highlights a structured, student-focused framework for success. Again, the proposal indicates that Universal Design for Learning principles will be utilized within MTSS and discusses how MTSS will "holistically address the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of its diverse student body." The proposal also describes how the plan will be implemented with fidelity.

5. Student Assessment **C.G.S. 10-66bb(d)(9)**	**Total Score:** 2.60	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Presents a comprehensive assessment system, including diagnostic, formative, benchmark, interim and summative assessments.				✓	
b. Indicates how the assessment system ensures the participation of all students on both the state mandated testing and other alternative assessments.				✓	
c. Explains how assessments will be used to determine, monitor, and report student, cohort, and school progress over time.				✓	
d. Demonstrates how assessment data will be used to improve curriculum, instruction, and tiered supports.					✓
e. Describes a clear process to use assessment data to apply appropriate and timely tiered student interventions, support, and targeted goals.					✓

Justifications:

(a) The proposal references using existing data to analyze student information, including previous data collected by the student's sending district. The proposal also discusses using NWEA data to provide a diagnostic level for each student for each student in reading. However, NWEA is a universal screener, not a diagnostic assessment. Additionally, the PSAT is an optional practice test and is not part of state accountability.

(b) The system's inclusivity ensures that all students, including those participating in state-mandated and alternative assessments, are accounted for. An assets-based view of data analysis is documented. The proposal discusses partnering with families but does not describe how the school will partner with families who do not speak English.

(c) The clear processes for using assessment data to monitor and report progress at the student, cohort, and school levels illustrate a strong dedication to transparency and continuous improvement. An extensive collection of data, including pre-entry and summer assessment of students is also described. Students are heavily involved in reflection of their own assessment performance. The proposal indicates that families will be kept informed of their child's progress. The proposal does not appear to address how school progress will be considered.

(d) The school's plan to continually disaggregate data "to ensure no student subgroup is disproportionately affected" based on specific groups is a strength. Teachers' structured team meetings will not only include department meetings but also grade-level meetings. This demonstrates a strong commitment to analyzing data through different lenses. The students will also provide course feedback to their teachers through a student survey.

(e) The proposal indicates regular review and analysis of individual student data on a frequent basis (weekly, quarterly, and semesterly. A specific metric for student participation in an academic intervention conference is noted. Basecamp sessions, in which "students complete weekly reflections tracking their attendance, homework completion, and formative assessments," additionally identifying improvement strategies is also discussed.

II. Strength of Organizational Effort

1. Experience and Expertise of Founders **Total Score:**	2.67	DNM	P	M	E
a. Demonstrates clear expertise and relevant experiences and/or qualifications of the founders.					✓
b. Specifies the role of the founding group in the development and launch of the proposed school. Includes founding members anticipated role or relationship with the proposed school.					✓
c. Identifies any organizations, agencies, or consultants that are partners in designing and launching the proposed school and provides evidence of the partner's ability to operate a high-quality school.				✓	

Justifications:

(a) The founding group brings impressive expertise and qualifications that reflect a strong foundation for the development and launch of the proposed school. Dr. Manuel's career in education has spanned over two decades, including "a turnaround project that improved the school's performance from the 5th percentile to the 74th percentile…in three years." Mr. Clarke is a Globally Certified Design Sprint Facilitator. Design Sprints are mentioned as a key component in curriculum development for the school. Both educators have participated in extensive turnaround projects, which is critical to have as an experience in an area where students are coming from schools that may be underperforming.

(b) The clear roles and responsibilities of the founding group in shaping the school's vision and implementation demonstrate a hands-on commitment to its success. Dr. Manuel will be the Chairperson for the Board of Trustees and Mr. Clarke will be the School Design Partner. Both partners' extensive experience will allow them to excel in performing the tasks for their expected roles.

(c) The evidence presented underscores the collaborative and capable nature of the team driving this initiative. The application's claims for the ASU's Prep Network are supported by data shared on the network's website. https://asuprep.asu.edu/success/ The LEAD organization (https://ctlead.org/) shows evidence that they will be capable of providing the services that are detailed in the proposal. Partner support letters for essential services are included.

This section is required, but not subject to scoring				
2. School Governance and Management C.G.S. 10-66bb(d)(3)	**YES**	**NO**		
a. Provides a viable governance structure and organizational chart showing proper oversight of various functions of the school.	Y			
b. Presents a clear picture of the officers and members, terms, election/appointment processes, and committees. Includes resumes of initial council membership, showing a wide range of expertise and experiences.	Y			
c. Specifies the criteria for selecting officers and members of the governing council detailing the recruitment and removal process.	Y			
d. Describes how the governing council will exercise its responsibility to oversee the operation of the school including, but not limited to, educational programs, governance and fiscal management, personnel, facility maintenance, and community outreach. Indicates how the governing council will hold the school accountable to families and stakeholders.	Y			
e. Defines the roles, responsibilities, and interaction between council membership, committees, and school administration.	Y			
f. Presents the process by which the governing council will hire and evaluate the school administrator.	Y			
g. **For applicants planning to partner with an organization.** Provides evidence indicating the CMO's ability to serve the intended student population; strong student outcomes and success at managing nonacademic school functions.	N/A			
g. There is no plan to partner with a CMO.				

3. School Leader **C.G.S. 10-66bb(d)(6)**	**Total Score:** 0.00	**YES**	**NO**		
a. ***For applicants with an identified school leader:*** Provides the name, qualifications, experiences, certifications, and education of the proposed lead administrator; offers evidence to demonstrate whether the individual has a record of leading a high-quality school.		N/A			
b. ***For applicants without an identified school leader:*** Presents a plan for recruiting and hiring a proven school leader and clearly articulates the characteristics and skills that the proposed school will evaluate in selecting a leader.			✓		
(a) The proposal does not name an identified school leader. (b) The proposal does not present a plan for the recruitment and hiring specific to an Executive Director role.					
4. Evidence of Support **C.G.S. 10-66bb(d)(2)**	**Total Score:** 1.00	**YES**	**NO**		
a. Provides evidence that the proposed school is welcomed by the local community.		✓			
(a) There are many letters of support and approximately 1500 letters of support from local families.					

III. Student Composition, Services, and Policies

1. School Demographics **C.G.S. §§ 10-66bb(d)(12), (15)**	**Total Score:** 2.33	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Describes the needs of the community, including demographics and student population to be served by the proposed school, and how it will potentially increase student achievement.				✓	
b. Provides an enrollment plan, including a clear rationale for grades served, enrollment, and growth.					✓
c. Describes procedures for family and community engagement to involve parents and guardians of enrolled students in student learning, school activities and school decision-making.				✓	

Justifications:

(a) Some information on increasing student achievement was provided. The proposed school effectively identifies the community's needs by addressing its diverse demographics and student population.
(b) The school ensures a sustainable and scalable approach by presenting a clear enrollment plan with a thoughtful rationale for the grades served and projected growth.
(c) Additionally, the emphasis on family and community engagement through transparent procedures for involving parents and guardians in learning, school activities, and decision-making reflects a holistic approach to fostering a supportive and inclusive educational environment. Additional considerations for transportation, language access, etc., should be made for families.

2. Special Education **Total Score:**	2.00	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Includes a comprehensive plan for educating students with disabilities.				✓	
b. Plans for adequate staffing to address the needs of students with disabilities and Section 504 Plans, including properly state-certified special education teachers(s).				✓	
c. Articulates a clear system to monitor student data and consider a student's eligibility for Section 504 services. Specifies plans to work with resident school district and proposed school staff for evaluation.				✓	
d. Presents a plan to engage the parents of students with disabilities.				✓	

Justifications:

(a) The proposal indicates curriculum-based supports. The curriculum will be scaffolded for diverse learners. Formative assessment data will enable the differentiation of services as required. Concern noted: Chart indicates that the student's district of residence would be responsible for the development of the IEP.
(b) The proposal does not indicate how many special education teachers or paraeducators would be hired based on the number of students with IEPs. However, the plan does mention hiring appropriately certified and qualified staff as necessary.
(c) The school establishes a clear and systematic process for monitoring student data, evaluating eligibility for Section 504 services, and collaborating with the resident school district and school staff for thorough evaluations. The plans to work with the resident school district are discussed. The proposal also discusses regularly communicating with students and parents regarding the potential need for a 504 plan.
(d) While the plan is in full compliance with special education law, more detail could be provided regarding engaging families who need transportation to the school, who need translation or interpretation, who cannot meet during the regular school hours, and who cannot access the digital platforms.

Technical notes:
Proposal writers should be aware that CT-SEDS will be required to manage student IEP data. Occupational/physical therapy is not an accommodation. Learning materials cannot be modified for a student with a 504 Plan. Learning materials can be linguistically differentiated for EL/ML students but should still align with appropriate grade-level standards. Note that if a student with an IEP is suspended for 10 or more days, a manifestation determination PPT must be held.

3. English learners/Multilingual learners (EL/ML)/ **Total Score:**	2.60	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Provides a plan to identify, serve and administer mandated assessments. (e.g., screenings, assessments, exit criteria). Explains how data will be used to inform instruction and monitor progress of EL/ML students and continued progress of exited EL/ML students.					✓
b. Describes how the proposed school will meet the learning needs of all EL/ML students and provide access to the general education curriculum.				✓	
c. Describes how the school will report and address progress in both language development and academic content, in the same manner and frequency as general education reporting, including translation services.					✓
d. Presents a plan that addresses how the academic and linguistic needs of EL/ML students will be monitored and how that process will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and ensure that the needs of EL/ML students are met.				✓	
e. Plans for adequate staffing to address the needs of EL/ML students, including properly state-certified staff.					✓

Justifications:

(a) The application provides a detailed plan to identify and serve EL/ML students.
(b) It outlines strategies to meet the learning needs of all EL/ML students, ensuring access to the general education curriculum. .
(c) The school is committed to transparent reporting on both language development and academic progress.
(d) A system is in place to monitor the academic and linguistic needs of EL/ML students. However, we have noted that the proposal states that a SPED-certified Director of Student Supports will provide professional development based on trends in EL/ML performance. It is important to note that someone with expertise in EL/ML students should be providing this professional development.
(e) Additionally, the plan includes provisions for satisfactory staffing, ensuring that state-certified educators with expertise in supporting EL/ML students are in place to deliver high-quality instruction. The proposal noted that while CT law requires at least one TESOL teacher once a district reaches 40 EL/ML students, the school will actively recruit TESOL teachers before meeting that threshold. Teacher professional development for all staff will cover EL/ML needs, including strategies from Teaching Tolerance (now Learning for Justice) and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

4. Admission Policy and Criteria **Total Score:**	2.67	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Provides a clear and coherent admissions policy and plan that complies with C.G.S. § 10-66bb. Includes a plan for admission lottery, explains how the proposed school will enroll students during the year if spaces become available.				✓	
b. Provides a viable plan to attract students and families from a diverse student body and avoid discrimination. Describes how the proposed school will enroll, and retain students with a history of low academic performance; students who receive free or reduced-price lunches, students with a history of behavioral and social difficulties and students identified as requiring special education.					✓
c. Shows a commitment to reduce racial, ethnic, and/or economic isolation. Describes relevant programs (e.g., curricular and extracurricular and/or student teacher recruitment), the school plans to implement.					✓

Justifications:

(a) The proposed school presents a solid admissions policy, including a transparent lottery process.
(b) The school outlines a thoughtful and inclusive strategy to attract a diverse student body. The school will actively recruit in areas of high poverty and ethnic/language diversity as well as many local community organizations, or local community areas such as grocery stores, churches, pediatricians' offices, etc. This will ensure the application process is widely known and transparent to many people.
(c) The school's in-school practices list heterogenous groupings, sheltered English instruction, and peer collaboration as ways to reduce isolation. Students can also have the opportunities for field trips, internships, extracurricular partnerships with local organizations, and interscholastic participation. Additionally, the proposal details the school's commitment to culturally relevant pedagogy.

5. Student Discipline Policies **Total Score:**	2.25	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Provides a clear behavior management system that encourages positive behaviors and integrates restorative practices into the SRBI or MTSS framework.					✓
b. Offers educational alternatives for students who are expelled or suspended, including strategies to prevent or reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions (non-exclusionary practices for those suspended).			✓		
c. Provides due process safeguards for all students, including those with disabilities.				✓	
d. Describes the proposed student code of conduct, which includes the new restorative practices policy, pursuant to Public Act 23-167.				✓	

Justifications:

(a) The school ensures a proactive and supportive environment by implementing a behavior management system within the MTSS framework. The proposal describes a Wellness Center which will offer "social-emotional learning opportunities, individual and group counseling services, and access to additional therapeutic services as needed." Proactive measures for behavior management are noted (students practicing habit-building). Families sign a letter of commitment, and workshops will be hosted to educate families on supporting the behavior code at home.

(b) This subsection highlights a commitment to non-exclusionary practices; more details are needed here. Further description may be needed to distinguish between suspension and expulsion practices (i.e. Sec. 10-233a does not permit for suspensions to exceed 10 consecutive school days).

(c) Due process safeguards are in place for all students, including those with disabilities, and they ensure fairness and equity with specific procedures (written notice, hearing officer provided, presentation of evidence, etc.). However, the applicants should note that suspending a student for more than 10 consecutive school days equates to an expulsion.

(d) The student code of conduct is adequately described; however, restorative practices should be taught proactively.

6. Human Resource Policies **Total Score:**	2.17	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Defines competencies and professional standards necessary for hiring teachers, administrators, and all other school staff. Creates processes for progressive discipline for staff conduct and performance issues.				✓	
b. Provides sample job descriptions that clearly articulates necessary staff competencies, expectations, and qualifications.				✓	
c. Describes a targeted staff size and plans to attract, retain and develop high-quality teachers and school leaders and comply with teacher certification.				✓	
d. Provides clear and effective procedures to document efforts to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of staff. Presents a system to evaluate and develop teachers and administrators.				✓	
e. Provides human resource policies around salaries, benefits, hiring, personnel contract, and affirmative action that align to the school mission, educational philosophy, students served, and budget.				✓	
f. Describes how the proposed school will evaluate teachers and administrators. Explains how the school will implement the Connecticut Guidelines for Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support.					✓

Justifications:

(a) The proposal provides clear justifications for lower staff-to-student ratio and waiver requests regarding staff certifications. A process for progressive discipline for staff is noted..
(b) Appendix H4 does not require an administrator endorsement for any of the administrators. No additional information is provided. Appendix H3 does provide job summaries for the Academic Director and Teacher.
(c) An ideal teacher-to-student ratio is named; the proposal acknowledges that this may not be feasible given budget constraints.
(d) Some detail is lacking; it does not provide the system to evaluate teachers and administrators. The evaluation of administrators was discussed earlier in the proposal and the evaluation of teachers is presented.
(e) Human resource policies are clear. The applicants mention that the HR policies "are designed to support our mission, educational philosophy, students served, and budget," however there is no additional detail given on how they align.
(f) There is a clear and deep understanding of CSDE requirements for teacher and administrator evaluation.

IV. School Viability

1. Building Options **Total Score:**	1.50	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Provides a plan and rationale for identifying and acquiring a facility to support the proposed school.					✓
b. Describes plans and associated timelines to renovate and bring the property into compliance with all applicable school building codes.		✓			

Justifications:

(a) Potential facility has been identified with clear criteria. The team has been actively engaged in discussions with the Mayor. The criteria have very specific focuses and the details such as ideally being within 1 mile of a business district shows a commitment to the school's mission.
(b) Information was not provided here.

2. Financial Plan **Total Score:**	1.00	**YES**	**NO**		
a. Provides a thorough pre-opening budget that reflects all commitments outlined in the application through the proposed school's fifth year of operation and shows sound financial planning and the fiscal viability of the school. Provides a full understanding of the statement, includes a budget narrative explaining the projected amounts reported in the budget by line item and by year.		✓			
b. Includes financial projections that accounts for all sources of revenue, detailing the estimated financial activity of the proposed school for the first five years of operation (e.g., state per-pupil grant; other federal, state, and private grants; donations and fundraising).		✓			
c. Presents a projected cash flow statement for year one of operation to show the estimated movement of funds in and out of the proposed school for year one of operation.		✓			
d. Presents a schedule of borrowings and repayments. Identifies estimated funds borrowed (loans, notes, mortgages, etc.), which includes the source of the funds, repayment schedule, and purpose of the borrowing.		✓			
e. Describes the fiscal controls and financial management policies the governing council will employ to provide oversight of the proposed school's financial position.		✓			
f. Presents a financial management system and processes aligned to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) with adequate internal controls, to track daily operations, including a description of the fiscal staff positions, qualifications, and duties.		✓			

3. Self-Evaluation and Accountability **Total Score:**	1.75	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Identifies clear and operational goals at all levels (e.g., school-wide, grade-level, classroom, staff, and student).			✓		
b. Provides clear systems of accountability for all stakeholders.				✓	
c. Identifies robust data systems and processes to regularly track leading and lagging indicators of student achievement, student enrollment, and organizational operations and effectiveness.				✓	
d. Presents a clear plan to share student learning practices and experiences with the local or regional board of education of the town in which the proposed school is located.				✓	

Justifications:

(a) The goals do not appear to have been fully identified yet or drafted.
(b) The plan describes hiring an external evaluator to conduct specific audits and reviews. The school will use all of CSDE's metrics within the school performance framework to assess its performance on a consistent basis, but the proposal does not outline how frequently this will occur.
(c) Plans are identified for data systems, but this subsection could use more detail.
(d) The proposal outlines specific partnerships that the school would like to foster, such as the New Haven BOE, New Haven officials, etc. It also mentions fostering collaborative efforts between their students and New Haven schools to address community issues.

4. Timetable **Total Score:**	1.00	**YES**	**NO**		
a. Provides a thorough action plan, outlining activities leading up to the successful launch of the proposed school (e.g., projects, staff responsible, deadlines, status, and resource alignment).		✓			
b. Demonstrates project management, showing the team's ability to coordinate, manage, track, and execute multiple work streams simultaneously.		✓			

(a) A thorough action plan is outlined.
(b) Dr. Manuel's and Mr. Clarke's project management experiences are detailed within the proposal, including copies of their resumes.

APPENDIX H: EVALUATION SUMMARY

Proposed Charter School Name: __Taino CoLAB New Haven_____ Date: 12/24/24

I. School Vision and Design		
1. Mission and Vision Statements	Score:	2.40
2. Educational Philosophy	Score:	2.67
3. Curriculum	Score:	2.50
4. Instruction	Score:	2.40
5. Student Assessment	Score:	2.40
II. Strength of Organizational Effort		
1. Experience and Expertise of Founders	Score:	2.67
2. School Governance and Management	Score:	N/A
3. School Leader	Score:	0.00
4. Evidence of Support	Score:	1.00
III. Student Composition, Services, and Policies		
1. School Demographics	Score:	2.33
2. Special Education	Score:	2.00
3. English Learners/Multilingual Learners	Score:	2.60
4. Admission Policy and Criteria	Score:	2.67
5. Student Discipline Policies	Score:	2.25
6. Human Resource Policies	Score:	2.17
IV. School Viability		
1. Building Options	Score:	1.50
2. Financial Plan	Score:	1.00
3. Self-Evaluation and Accountability	Score:	1.75
4. Timetable	Score:	1.00
	Total Score:	35.31

Section 4: Preferences		
1a. Serving High-Need Student Populations through Establishment of Educational Programs	**YES**	**NO**
1b. Serving High-Need Student Populations by Using Specific Strategies to Attract, Enroll and Retain Students from the above populations	**YES**	**NO**
2. Turning Around an Existing School	**YES**	**NO**
3. Opening in a Priority School District or District with at Least 75 Percent Racial or Ethnic Minority Enrollment	**YES**	**NO**
4. Being a Higher Education Institution	**YES**	**NO**
5. Locating the School at a Work Site	**YES**	**NO**

APPENDIX G: APPLICATION RUBRIC

Proposed Charter School Name: Taino CoLAB Waterbury **Date: 12/24/24**

Directions: Using the rubric below, please apply the Review Standards to score each section of the RFP on a scale of "0 – Does Not Meet" to "3 – Exceeds"; evaluate each of the sub-indicators to arrive at an overall "Total Score" for each section. The total score for each section should reflect an average of the scores for each of the sub-indicators outlined for that section. Enter the total score for each section on the final "Evaluation Summary" page.

Review Standards:	
DNM	**Does Not Meet:** The response lacks meaningful detail, demonstrates a lack of preparation, or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the applicant's understanding of the issues in concept and/or ability to meet the requirement in practice.
P	**Partially Meets:** The response lacks critical details in certain areas. The response requires additional information to be considered reasonably comprehensive and demonstrate a clear vision of how the school will operate.
M	**Meets:** The response indicates solid preparation and a grasp of the key issues, as demonstrated by a reasonable and comprehensive response. It addresses the review criteria with information showing preparation and a clear, realistic picture of how the school will operate. The response demonstrates the ability of the applicant to execute the vision described in the response.
E	**Exceeds:** The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. The response indicates thorough preparation, expertise, and a clear and compelling picture of how the school will operate. The response demonstrates the readiness of the applicant to successfully execute the vision described in the response.

I. School Vision and Design

1. Mission, Purpose and Specialized Focus C.G.S. §§ 10-66bb(d)1,(7)	**Total Score:** 2.40	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Describes the mission of the proposed school.				✓	
b. Defines the core purpose and key values of the school, specific to the school model, grade configuration and the total number of students it plans to enroll and serve.					✓
c. Explains how the school mission is consistent throughout the application and illustrates high academic standards for student success.				✓	
d. Presents a clear vision of the school. Identifies a specialized focus and ways in which the school will positively impact its stakeholders and community.					✓
e. Articulates how the school's vision aligns with the school's mission and how it will operate once it's opened.				✓	

Justifications:

(a) The proposed school's mission is well-defined, capturing a commitment to high academic standards and a dedication to student success.

(b) The 4D Quantum Learning Matrix is being piloted; the research supporting its usage is provided. Articulating its core purpose and key values, tailored to its specific school model, demonstrates thoughtful planning and intentionality. The school's consideration of Taino values shows deep cultural responsiveness.

(c) The proposal recognizes Waterbury's need for additional high school options, especially in a district whose graduation rates lag the state average. It delineates how the core purpose of CoLAB (creating transformative educational experiences) is integrated into a comprehensive approach using the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix framework. The authors provide the research that bolsters the framework.

(d) The school's specialized focus on community leadership and economic agility demonstrates a commitment to positively contributing to the local community. The proposal has a detailed Portrait of a CoLAB Graduate that clearly shows both thoughtfulness and high expectations of all aspects of a student's postsecondary success. Note: Appendix K1: Community Partnerships and Support Letters is where those items can be found.

(e) The clear explanation of the 4D Quantum Learning Matrix shows how Taino values will foster the preparation of students to be equity-minded trailblazers. The proposal discusses the real-world projects and community engagement activities the students will engage in, which will lead to the school's vision of students being impactful community leaders.

2. Educational Philosophy	**Total Score:**	2.67	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Describes the founding group's core beliefs and values.						✓
b. Demonstrates the philosophy to embrace and serve the diverse needs of individual students.						✓
c. Provides an effective approach that is likely to improve students' academic performance.					✓	

Justifications:

(a) The founding group's core beliefs and values are inspiring and rooted in a commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment.
(b) Their philosophy of embracing and serving the diverse needs of individual students reflects a deep understanding of the importance of personalized education.
(c) By prioritizing tailored approaches recognizing each student's unique strengths and challenges, they demonstrate a thoughtful strategy to empower learners and enhance their academic performance.

3. Curriculum **C.G.S. 10-66bb(d)(5)**	**Total Score:**	2.50	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Explains the process to access, identify or develop curriculum to be used by the school and provides criteria for the process.						✓
b. Applies appropriate legislation to evidence alignment to SBE approved standards and frameworks, the Connecticut Core Standards for English language arts, mathematics and the NGSS for science (i.e., scope and sequence, curriculum map, or lesson plan for course of study, etc.).					✓	
c. Provides evidence demonstrating that the curriculum is likely to improve students' academic performance. Is research-based information provided to support proof of high student achievement?					✓	
d. Demonstrates accessibility and appropriateness for students at all levels, including EL/ML, students with disabilities and other at-risk students.					✓	
e. Describes a clear plan for the ongoing development, improvement, and refinement of the curriculum.						✓
f. Describes a process for monitoring and evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of the curriculum.						✓

Justifications:

(a) The school's approach to curriculum development is thoughtful and comprehensive, demonstrating a clear and rigorous process. The indicators are clear, with aligned questions provided for each. The additional resources highlighted, including the C3 Framework and Hattie's Visible Learning research will foster rigorous academic expectations. The application also indicates that Understanding by Design will be used as a guiding protocol. UbD has a solid research base behind it. The process for identifying curriculum is detailed and rigorous.
(b) The alignment with relevant standards is supported with detailed evidence and provides explicit alignment with the relevant standards in a sample rubric.
(c) The emphasis on research-based practices validates the curriculum's potential to drive high student achievement. Research citations are provided for each curricular resource.
(d) The accessibility and appropriateness of the curriculum for diverse student populations reflect a commitment to equity and inclusivity, although further attention is needed for students with disabilities and students identified as English Learners. The proposal's curricular resources each show consideration for students with different learning needs.
(e) The clear plan for ongoing development and refinement, coupled with a robust process for monitoring and evaluating effectiveness, ensures continuous improvement and lasting positive outcomes for students. The proposal details a "holistic approach to curriculum planning."
(f) The proposal has thoroughly detailed plans for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum. The comprehensive evaluation plan will collect many different data points through formative and summative evaluation. They will use multiple types of analyses in assessing data. The plan ensures that feedback will be collected and utilized from all stakeholders.

4. Instruction **C.G.S. §§ 10-66bb(d) (5),(10)**	**Total Score:** 2.40	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Examples provided that describes the instructional methods or techniques that will be used to facilitate high-quality teaching and learning.				✓	
b. Demonstrates how instructional methods support high standards of achievement and are accessible and appropriate for all students.				✓	
c. Explains how the school will create a data-driven culture to meet a wide range of students using differentiated tiered instruction.					✓
d. Describes how the school will determine, support for staff and provide instructional professional development to ensure high quality instructional methods are delivered.				✓	
e. Describes the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and related monitoring of student progress and provision of tiered instruction.					✓

Justifications:

(a) The master schedule was provided instead of describing instructional methods, but some techniques, such as meditation breaks, were included. However, instructional methods are detailed.

(b) The techniques described promote accessibility and appropriateness for students, albeit needing further attention toward students with disabilities and students identified as English Learners. Some instructional methods listed are inquiry-based learning, design thinking, integrated literacy practices, AI-augmented learning, and using an agile ecosystem.

(c) The emphasis on creating a data-driven culture and implementing differentiated, tiered instruction demonstrates a proactive approach to meeting the diverse needs of learners. The components of the school's data-driven culture, including a systematic approach to data collection, ongoing teacher training specifically in data analysis and interpretation, collaborative data analysis, real-time feedback with AI-driven platforms, and personalized learning plans are listed. The proposal also indicates that their instruction will include Universal Design for Learning principles. The authors also explain their understanding of a tiered instructional framework.

(d) The school's plan regarding professional development ensures the delivery of effective instructional practices. The details for teacher professional development are also included. The proposal describes new educators being paired up with mentors and includes teachers engaging "in action research projects to test and refine instructional strategies based on data-driven inquiries." The plan is very ambitious, and it is difficult to see how all components would be implemented adequately.

(e) The detailed description of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), and its integration with monitoring student progress further highlights a structured, student-focused framework for success. Again, the proposal indicates that Universal Design for Learning principles will be utilized within MTSS and discusses how MTSS will "holistically address the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of its diverse student body." A description of how the plan will be implemented with fidelity is included.

5. Student Assessment **C.G.S. 10-66bb(d)(9)**	**Total Score:** 2.40	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Presents a comprehensive assessment system, including diagnostic, formative, benchmark, interim and summative assessments.				✓	
b. Indicates how the assessment system ensures the participation of all students on both the state mandated testing and other alternative assessments.				✓	
c. Explains how assessments will be used to determine, monitor, and report student, cohort, and school progress over time.				✓	
d. Demonstrates how assessment data will be used to improve curriculum, instruction, and tiered supports.					✓
e. Describes a clear process to use assessment data to apply appropriate and timely tiered student interventions, support, and targeted goals.					✓

Justifications:

(a) The proposal references using existing data to analyze student information, including previous data collected by the student's sending district. The proposal discusses using NWEA data to provide a diagnostic level for each student in reading; however, NWEA is a universal screener, not a diagnostic assessment. Additionally, the PSAT is an optional practice test and is not part of state accountability.

(b) The system's inclusivity ensures that all students, including those participating in state-mandated and alternative assessments, are accounted for. An assets-based view of data analysis is documented. The proposal discusses partnering with families but does not discuss how the school will partner with families who do not speak English.

(c) The clear processes for using assessment data to monitor and report progress at the student, cohort, and school levels illustrate a strong dedication to transparency and continuous improvement. The plan describes an extensive collection of data, including pre-entry and summer assessment of students. Students are heavily involved in reflection of their own assessment performance and the proposal indicates that families will be kept informed of their child's progress. The proposal does not appear to address how school progress will be considered.

(d) The school's plan to continually disaggregate data "to ensure no student subgroup is disproportionately affected" based on specific groups is a strength. Teachers' structured team meetings will not only include department meetings but also grade-level meetings. This demonstrates a strong commitment to analyzing data through different lenses. The students will also provide course feedback to their teachers through a student survey.

(e) The proposal indicates regular review and analysis of individual student data on a frequent basis (i.e., weekly, quarterly, and semesterly). A specific metric for student participation in an academic intervention conference is noted. Basecamp sessions, in which "students complete weekly reflections tracking their attendance, homework completion, and formative assessments," additionally identifying improvement strategies is discussed.

II. Strength of Organizational Effort					
1. Experience and Expertise of Founders **Total Score:**	2.67	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Demonstrates clear expertise and relevant experiences and/or qualifications of the founders.					✓
b. Specifies the role of the founding group in the development and launch of the proposed school. Includes founding members anticipated role or relationship with the proposed school.					✓
c. Identifies any organizations, agencies, or consultants that are partners in designing and launching the proposed school and provides evidence of the partner's ability to operate a high-quality school.				✓	

Justifications:

(a) The founding group brings impressive expertise and qualifications that reflect a strong foundation for the development and launch of the proposed school. Dr. Manuel's career in education has spanned over two decades, including "a turnaround project that improved the school's performance from the 5th percentile to the 74th percentile…in three years." Mr. Clarke is a Globally Certified Design Sprint Facilitator. Design Sprints are mentioned as a key component in curriculum development for the school. Both educators have participated in extensive turnaround projects, which is critical to have as an experience in an area where students are coming from schools that may be underperforming.

(b) The clear roles and responsibilities of the founding group in shaping the school's vision and implementation demonstrate a hands-on commitment to its success. Dr. Manuel will be the Chairperson for the Board of Trustees and Mr. Clarke will be the School Design Partner. Both partners' extensive experience will allow them to excel in performing the tasks for their expected roles.

(c) The evidence presented underscores the collaborative and capable nature of the team driving this initiative. The application's claims for the ASU's Prep Network are supported by data shared on the network's website. https://asuprep.asu.edu/success/ The LEAD organization (https://ctlead.org/) shows evidence that they will be capable of providing the services. Partner support letters for essential services are in Appendix F.

This section is required, but not subject to scoring				
2. School Governance and Management C.G.S. 10-66bb(d)(3)	**YES**	**NO**		
a. Provides a viable governance structure and organizational chart showing proper oversight of various functions of the school.	✓			
b. Presents a clear picture of the officers and members, terms, election/appointment processes, and committees. Includes resumes of initial council membership, showing a wide range of expertise and experiences.	✓			
c. Specifies the criteria for selecting officers and members of the governing council detailing the recruitment and removal process.	✓			
d. Describes how the governing council will exercise its responsibility to oversee the operation of the school including, but not limited to, educational programs, governance and fiscal management, personnel, facility maintenance, and community outreach. Indicates how the governing council will hold the school accountable to families and stakeholders.	✓			
e. Defines the roles, responsibilities, and interaction between council membership, committees, and school administration.	✓			
f. Presents the process by which the governing council will hire and evaluate the school administrator.	✓			
g. **For applicants planning to partner with an organization.** Provides evidence indicating the CMO's ability to serve the intended student population; strong student outcomes and success at managing nonacademic school functions.	N/A			
g. There is no plan to partner with a CMO.				

3. School Leader **C.G.S. 10-66bb(d)(6)**	**Total Score:**	0.00	**YES**	**NO**		
a. ***For applicants with an identified school leader:*** Provides the name, qualifications, experiences, certifications, and education of the proposed lead administrator; offers evidence to demonstrate whether the individual has a record of leading a high-quality school.			N/A			
b. ***For applicants without an identified school leader:*** Presents a plan for recruiting and hiring a proven school leader and clearly articulates the characteristics and skills that the proposed school will evaluate in selecting a leader.				N		
a. The proposal does not name an identified school leader. b. The proposal does not present a plan for the recruitment and hiring specific to an Executive Director role.						
4. Evidence of Support **C.G.S. 10-66bb(d)(2)**	**Total Score:**	1.00	**YES**	**NO**		
a. Provides evidence that the proposed school is welcomed by the local community.			Y			
(a) There are many letters of support and approximately 1500 letters of support from local families.						

III. Student Composition, Services, and Policies

1. School Demographics **C.G.S. §§ 10-66bb(d)(12),(15)**	**Total Score:**	2.33	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Describes the needs of the community, including demographics and student population to be served by the proposed school, and how it will potentially increase student achievement.					✓	
b. Provides an enrollment plan, including a clear rationale for grades served, enrollment, and growth.						✓
c. Describes procedures for family and community engagement to involve parents and guardians of enrolled students in student learning, school activities and school decision-making.					✓	

Justifications:

(a) Some information on increasing student achievement was provided. The proposed school effectively identifies the community's needs by addressing its diverse demographics and student population.

(b) The school ensures a sustainable and scalable approach by presenting a clear enrollment plan with a thoughtful rationale for the grades served and projected growth. The enrollment plan demonstrates a specific understanding of how to build a schoolwide culture beginning in the summer before 9th grade. The students will be introduced to the innovative career pathways, as well as the school's values and ways of learning.

(c) Additionally, the emphasis on family and community engagement through transparent procedures for involving parents and guardians in learning, school activities, and decision-making reflects a holistic approach to fostering a supportive and inclusive educational environment. Additional considerations for transportation, language access, etc., should be made for families.

2. Special Education	**Total Score:**	2.00	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Includes a comprehensive plan for educating students with disabilities.					✓	
b. Plans for adequate staffing to address the needs of students with disabilities and Section 504 Plans, including properly state-certified special education teachers(s).					✓	
c. Articulates a clear system to monitor student data and consider a student's eligibility for Section 504 services. Specifies plans to work with resident school district and proposed school staff for evaluation.					✓	
d. Presents a plan to engage the parents of students with disabilities.					✓	

Justifications:

(a) The proposal indicates curriculum-based supports and will be scaffolded for diverse learners. Formative assessment data will enable the differentiation of services as required. Concern noted: Chart indicates that the student's district of residence would be responsible for the development of the IEP.

(b) The proposal does not indicate how many special education teachers or paraeducators would be hired based on the number of students with IEPs. However, the plan does mention hiring appropriately certified and qualified staff as necessary.

(c) The school establishes a clear and systematic process for monitoring student data, evaluating eligibility for Section 504 services, and collaborating with the resident school district and school staff for thorough evaluations. The plans to work with the resident school district are included. The proposal also discusses regularly communicating with students and parents regarding the potential need for a 504 plan.

(d) While the plan is in compliance with special education law, more detail could be provided regarding engaging families who need transportation to the school, who need translation or interpretation, who cannot meet during the regular school hours, and who cannot access the digital platforms.

Technical notes:

Proposal writers should be aware that CT-SEDS will be required to manage student IEP data. Occupational/physical therapy is not an accommodation. Learning materials cannot be modified for a student with a 504 Plan. Learning materials can be linguistically differentiated for EL/ML students but should still align with appropriate grade-level standards. Note that if a student with an IEP is suspended for 10 or more days, a manifestation determination PPT must be held.

3. English learners/Multilingual learners (EL/ML) Total Score: 2.60	DNM	P	M	E
a. Provides a plan to identify, serve and administer mandated assessments. (e.g., screenings, assessments, exit criteria). Explains how data will be used to inform instruction and monitor progress of EL/ML students and continued progress of exited EL/ML students.				✓
b. Describes how the proposed school will meet the learning needs of all EL/ML students and provide access to the general education curriculum.			✓	
c. Describes how the school will report and address progress in both language development and academic content, in the same manner and frequency as general education reporting, including translation services.				✓
d. Presents a plan that addresses how the academic and linguistic needs of EL/ML students will be monitored and how that process will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and ensure that the needs of EL/ML students are met.			✓	
e. Plans for adequate staffing to address the needs of EL/ML students, including properly state-certified staff.				✓

Justifications:

(a) The application provides a detailed plan to identify and serve EL/ML students. An asset-based view is indicated.
(b) It outlines strategies to meet the learning needs of all EL/ML students, ensuring access to the general education curriculum.
(c) The school is committed to transparent reporting on both language development and academic progress.
(d) A system is in place to monitor the academic and linguistic needs of EL/ML students. However, we have noted that the proposal states that a SPED-certified Director of Student Supports will provide professional development based on trends in EL/ML. It is important to note that someone with expertise in EL/ML students should be providing this professional development.
(e) Additionally, the plan includes provisions for satisfactory staffing, ensuring that state-certified educators with expertise in supporting EL/ML students are in place to deliver high-quality instruction. The proposal noted that while CT law requires at least one TESOL teacher once a district reaches 40 EL/ML students, the school will actively recruit TESOL teachers before meeting that threshold. Teacher professional development for all staff will cover EL/ML needs, including strategies from Teaching Tolerance (now Learning for Justice) and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

4. Admission Policy and Criteria Total Score: 2.67	DNM	P	M	E
a. Provides a clear and coherent admissions policy and plan that complies with C.G.S. § 10-66bb. Includes a plan for admission lottery, explains how the proposed school will enroll students during the year if spaces become available.			✓	
b. Provides a viable plan to attract students and families from a diverse student body and avoid discrimination. Describes how the proposed school will enroll, and retain students with a history of low academic performance; students who receive free or reduced-price lunches, students with a history of behavioral and social difficulties and students identified as requiring special education.				✓
c. Shows a commitment to reduce racial, ethnic, and/or economic isolation. Describes relevant programs (e.g., curricular and extracurricular and/or student teacher recruitment), the school plans to implement.				✓

Justifications:

(a) The proposed school presents a solid admissions policy, including a transparent lottery process.
(b) The school outlines a thoughtful and inclusive strategy to attract a diverse student body. The school will actively recruit in areas of high poverty and ethnic/language diversity as well as many local community organizations, or local community areas such as grocery stores, churches, pediatricians' offices, etc. This will ensure the application process is widely known and transparent to many people.
(c) The school's in-school practices list heterogenous groupings, sheltered English instruction, and peer collaboration as ways to reduce isolation. Students can also have the opportunities for field trips, internships, extracurricular partnerships with local organizations, and interscholastic participation. Additionally, the proposal details the school's commitment to culturally relevant pedagogy.

5. Student Discipline Policies	Total Score: 2.00	DNM	P	M	E
a. Provides a clear behavior management system that encourages positive behaviors and integrates restorative practices into the SRBI or MTSS framework.					✓
b. Offers educational alternatives for students who are expelled or suspended, including strategies to prevent or reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions (non-exclusionary practices for those suspended).			✓		
c. Provides due process safeguards for all students, including those with disabilities.				✓	
d. Describes the proposed student code of conduct, which includes the new restorative practices policy, pursuant to Public Act 23-167.				✓	

Justifications:

(a) The school ensures a proactive and supportive environment by implementing a behavior management system within the MTSS framework. The proposal describes a Wellness Center which will offer "social-emotional learning opportunities, individual and group counseling services, and access to additional therapeutic services as needed." Proactive measures for behavior management are noted (students practicing habit-building). Families sign a letter of commitment, and workshops will be hosted to educate families on supporting the behavior code at home.

(b) This subsection highlights a commitment to non-exclusionary practices; more details are needed here. Further description may be needed to distinguish between suspension and expulsion practices (i.e. Sec. 10-233a does not permit for suspensions to exceed 10 consecutive school days).

(c) Due process safeguards are in place for all students, including those with disabilities, and they ensure fairness and equity with specific procedures (written notice, hearing officer provided, presentation of evidence, etc.). However, the applicants should note that suspending a student for more than 10 consecutive school days equates to an expulsion. (Sec. 10-233a)

(d) The student code of conduct is adequately described, however, restorative practices should be taught proactively.

6. Human Resource Policies	Total Score: 2.17	DNM	P	M	E
a. Defines competencies and professional standards necessary for hiring teachers, administrators, and all other school staff. Creates processes for progressive discipline for staff conduct and performance issues.				✓	
b. Provides sample job descriptions that clearly articulates necessary staff competencies, expectations, and qualifications.				✓	
c. Describes a targeted staff size and plans to attract, retain and develop high-quality teachers and school leaders and comply with teacher certification.				✓	
d. Provides clear and effective procedures to document efforts to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of staff. Presents a system to evaluate and develop teachers and administrators.				✓	
e. Provides human resource policies around salaries, benefits, hiring, personnel contract, and affirmative action that align to the school mission, educational philosophy, students served, and budget.				✓	
f. Describes how the proposed school will evaluate teachers and administrators. Explains how the school will implement the Connecticut Guidelines for Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support.					✓

Justifications:

(a) The proposal provides clear justifications for lower staff-to-student ratio and waiver requests regarding staff certifications. A process for progressive discipline for staff is noted.

(b) The proposal does not require an administrator endorsement for any of the administrators. No additional information is provided. However, the proposal does provide job summaries for the Academic Director and

Teacher.
(c) An ideal teacher-to-student ratio is named; the proposal acknowledges that this may not be feasible given budget constraints.
(d) Some detail is lacking; it does not provide the system to evaluate teachers and administrators here. The evaluation of administrators was discussed earlier in the proposal, and the evaluation of teachers is presented.
(e) Human resource policies are clear. The applicants mention that the HR policies "are designed to support our mission, educational philosophy, students served, and budget," however there is no additional detail given on how they align.
(f) There is a clear and deep understanding of CSDE requirements for teacher and administrator evaluation.

IV. School Viability

1. Building Options	Total Score:	1.00	DNM	P	M	E
a. Provides a plan and rationale for identifying and acquiring a facility to support the proposed school.					✓	
b. Describes plans and associated timelines to renovate and bring the property into compliance with all applicable school building codes.			0			

Justifications:

(a) There is no potential facility identified, but the school's criteria for a facility is outlined. The team has been working with real estate agents. The criteria have very specific focuses and the details such as ideally being within 1 mile of a business district shows a commitment to the school's mission.
(b) Information was not provided here.

2. Financial Plan **Total Score:**	1.00	**YES**	**NO**		
a. Provides a thorough pre-opening budget that reflects all commitments outlined in the application through the proposed school's fifth year of operation and shows sound financial planning and the fiscal viability of the school. Provides a full understanding of the statement, includes a budget narrative explaining the projected amounts reported in the budget by line item and by year.		✓			
b. Includes financial projections that accounts for all sources of revenue, detailing the estimated financial activity of the proposed school for the first five years of operation (e.g., state per-pupil grant; other federal, state, and private grants; donations and fundraising).		✓			
c. Presents a projected cash flow statement for year one of operation to show the estimated movement of funds in and out of the proposed school for year one of operation.		✓			
d. Presents a schedule of borrowings and repayments. Identifies estimated funds borrowed (loans, notes, mortgages, etc.), which includes the source of the funds, repayment schedule, and purpose of the borrowing.		✓			
e. Describes the fiscal controls and financial management policies the governing council will employ to provide oversight of the proposed school's financial position.		✓			
f. Presents a financial management system and processes aligned to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) with adequate internal controls, to track daily operations, including a description of the fiscal staff positions, qualifications, and duties.		✓			

3. Self-Evaluation and Accountability **Total Score:**	1.75	**DNM**	**P**	**M**	**E**
a. Identifies clear and operational goals at all levels (e.g., school-wide, grade-level, classroom, staff, and student).			✓		
b. Provides clear systems of accountability for all stakeholders.				✓	
c. Identifies robust data systems and processes to regularly track leading and lagging indicators of student achievement, student enrollment, and organizational operations and effectiveness.				✓	
d. Presents a clear plan to share student learning practices and experiences with the local or regional board of education of the town in which the proposed school is located.				✓	

Justifications:

(a) The goals do not appear to have been fully identified yet, however there is an outlined plan to do so.
(b) The plan describes hiring an external evaluator to conduct specific audits and reviews. The school will use all of CSDE's metrics within the school performance framework to assess its performance on a consistent basis, but the proposal does not outline how frequently this will occur.
(c) Plans are identified for data systems, but this subsection could use more detail.
(d) The proposal outlines specific partnerships that the school would like to foster, such as the Waterbury BOE, Waterbury officials, etc. It also mentions fostering collaborative efforts between their students and Waterbury schools to address community issues.

4. Timetable **Total Score:**	1.00	**YES**	**NO**		
a. Provides a thorough action plan, outlining activities leading up to the successful launch of the proposed school (e.g., projects, staff responsible, deadlines, status, and resource alignment).		✓			
b. Demonstrates project management, showing the team's ability to coordinate, manage, track, and execute multiple work streams simultaneously.		✓			

(a) A thorough action plan is outlined.
(b) Dr. Manuel's and Mr. Clarke's project management experiences are detailed within the proposal, including copies of their resumes.

APPENDIX H: EVALUATION SUMMARY

Proposed Charter School Name: __Taino CoLAB Academy, Waterbury_____ Date: 12/24/2024

I. School Vision and Design		
1. Mission and Vision Statements	Score:	2.40
2. Educational Philosophy	Score:	2.67
3. Curriculum	Score:	2.50
4. Instruction	Score:	2.40
5. Student Assessment	Score:	2.40
II. Strength of Organizational Effort		
1. Experience and Expertise of Founders	Score:	2.67
2. School Governance and Management	Score:	N/A
3. School Leader	Score:	0.00
4. Evidence of Support	Score:	1.00
III.Student Composition, Services, and Policies		
1. School Demographics	Score:	2.33
2. Special Education	Score:	2.00
3. English Learners/Multilingual Learners	Score:	2.60
4. Admission Policy and Criteria	Score:	2.67
5. Student Discipline Policies	Score:	2.00
6. Human Resource Policies	Score:	2.17
IV. School Viability		
1. Building Options	Score:	1.00
2. Financial Plan	Score:	1.00
3. Self-Evaluation and Accountability	Score:	1.75
4. Timetable	Score:	1.00
	Total Score:	34.56

Section 4: Preferences		
1a. Serving High-Need Student Populations through Establishment of Educational Programs	**YES**	**NO**
1b. Serving High-Need Student Populations by Using Specific Strategies to Attract, Enroll and Retain Students from the above populations	**YES**	**NO**
2. Turning Around an Existing School	**YES**	**NO**
3. Opening in a Priority School District or District with at Least 75 Percent Racial or Ethnic Minority Enrollment	**YES**	**NO**
4. Being a Higher Education Institution	**YES**	**NO**
5. Locating the School at a Work Site	**YES**	**NO**

Attachment C

WOODBRIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

40 Beecher Road – South
Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525

Vonda J. Tencza – Superintendent
vtencza@woodbridgeps.org

December 16, 2024

Felicia Canty
Charter School Office Liaison
Connecticut State Department of Education
P.O. Box 2219
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Felicia:

I am responding to the request soliciting comments on the charter application of the Taino CoLAB – New Haven. I know of no reason nor can I provide any comments, which reflect poorly on the Taino CoLAB – New Haven. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Vonda J. Tencza
Superintendent

Karl Jacobson
Chief of Police

Justin Elicker
Mayor

CITY OF NEW HAVEN
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE SERVICE
ONE UNION AVENUE | NEW HAVEN, CONN. | 06519
(203) 946-6333 newhavenct.gov

May 6, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Dr. Commissioner's Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of Taino CoLAB Academy High School in New Haven, CT. As Chief of Police, I am deeply committed to advancing educational opportunities that are innovative, inclusive, and aligned with the future needs of our students and community.

Taino CoLAB Academy High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices, personalized learning pathways, and a curriculum focused on inquiry, design, creativity, and leadership directly addresses the evolving landscape of education and workforce preparedness. Their partnership with LEAD CT and emphasis on community collaboration ensure the proposed school will be a valuable asset to New Haven, promoting academic excellence and cultural understanding.

I believe the Taino CoLAB Academy High School will make a significant difference in the lives of students by providing them with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Therefore, I respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Karl Jacobson
Chief of Police

Karl Jacobson
Chief of Police

Justin Elicker
Mayor

CITY OF NEW HAVEN
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE SERVICE
ONE UNION AVENUE | NEW HAVEN, CONN. | 06519
(203) 946-6333 newhavenct.gov

May 6, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Dr. Commissioner's Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of Taino CoLAB Academy High School in New Haven, CT. As Assistant Chief of Police, I am deeply committed to advancing educational opportunities that are innovative, inclusive, and aligned with the future needs of our students and community.

Taino CoLAB Academy High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices, personalized learning pathways, and a curriculum focused on inquiry, design, creativity, and leadership directly addresses the evolving landscape of education and workforce preparedness. Their partnership with LEAD CT and emphasis on community collaboration ensure the proposed school will be a valuable asset to New Haven, promoting academic excellence and cultural understanding.

I believe the Taino CoLAB Academy High School will make a significant difference in the lives of students by providing them with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Therefore, I respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

David Zannelli
Assistant Chief of Police

May 13, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

It is with great pleasure that I, on behalf of JUNTA For Progressive Action, extend our strong support for the establishment of the Taino CoLAB Academy High School in New Haven. This initiative represents a pioneering approach to education that emphasizes AI-enhanced learning and deep community engagement.

Taino CoLAB Academy's vision for a curriculum that blends technological innovation with critical thinking and creativity is a perfect match for our objectives in educational reform. Their strategic partnership with LEAD CT will undoubtedly foster a nurturing environment for academic and personal growth within the student body.

We are excited about the possibility of partnering with Taino CoLAB Academy to support and amplify their efforts in transforming education in New Haven. We believe that our collaborative initiatives could serve as a model for future educational endeavors providing wrap-around social services, youth leadership development, and adult educational opportunities.

We respectfully urge your swift approval of Taino CoLAB Academy's charter, as it promises to be a significant asset to the New Haven educational landscape.

Thank you for considering our endorsement and the potential for a productive partnership.

Sincerely,

Cheila Serrano
Director of Operations
cheila.serrano@juntainc.org

Community Action Agency of New Haven, Inc.
419 Whalley Avenue
New Haven, CT 06511
Phone: 203-387-7700
Fax: 203-397-7475
www.caanh.net

May 20, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express Community Action Agency of New Haven's enthusiastic support for the application of Taino CoLAB Academy High School in New Haven. As advocates for innovative educational models, we find Taino CoLAB's approach to leveraging AI and personalized learning as groundbreaking.

The academy's commitment to nurturing leadership and creative skills among students, coupled with its partnership with LEAD CT, aligns with our vision of education as a tool for community empowerment and individual success.

We are particularly interested in exploring ways to partner with Taino CoLAB Academy to further enrich the educational experience of students given the wholistic approach with wraparound services the school is seeking to provide. We believe that our involvement as a community partner could help extend the reach and deepen the impact of the academy's innovative programs and the families they will serve through the provision of our programs that include energy assistance, urgent diaper bank, case management, health literacy, single mother services, unhousing support, income tax preparation and more.

We urge the State Education Commission to approve this important educational initiative, which promises to reshape the educational experience in New Haven and beyond.

Thank you for considering our support for this exciting endeavor. We are hopeful for the opportunity to collaborate on this transformative project.

Kind regards,

Amos L. Smith
President & CEO
asmith@caanh.net
(203) 859-6633

Catholic Charities
Archdiocese of Hartford
Early Childhood Programs

Sylvia Velez, Center Director
Catholic Charities – Centro San Jose
290 Grand Avenue, New Haven, CT 06513

May 22, 2024

Commission
er Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

It is with great pleasure that Catholic Charities–Centro San Jose endorses the charter application for Taino CoLAB Academy High School. The integration of advanced AI technology fused with culture into their curriculum and their commitment to an environment that nurtures inquiry and design thinking are critical for an education system looking to the future.

Taino CoLAB Academy's strategy, developed in partnership with CT LEAD, positions the school to be a beacon of educational innovation in New Haven. We are particularly impressed by their comprehensive approach to education, preparing students for academic success and life's varied challenges.

Catholic Charities–Centro San Jose is enthusiastic about the possibility of partnering with Taino CoLAB Academy to enhance educational opportunities for the youth in our community. While high school aged students attend the Taino CoLAB Academy High School, their younger siblings between 3–5 years old may attend our School Readiness programs, Youth Development programs, and participate in a scholarship program.

We fervently support the approval of their charter and look forward to the myriad opportunities our partnership could provide to the broader public. As a community partner with over 100 years serving individuals and families attain higher levels of education, we believe that the Taino CoLAB Academy will help open the doors for the future of the New Haven residents and serve as an educational institution that can help remove barriers and impact every child, parent, family, and community in a wholistic and positive manner.

Thank you for considering this transformative proposal. We anticipate actively contributing to this project and are excited to see the positive outcomes it promises.

Best regards,

Sylvia Velez, Director
svelez@ccaoh.org
(203) 777-6771

Fernando Ramirez
President
New Haven Hispanic FireFighters Association
P.O. Box 263
New Haven, CT 06513

May 14, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

On behalf of the New Haven Fire Fighters Association, I am delighted to advocate for the charter approval of Taino CoLAB Academy High School. This school's commitment to integrating cutting-edge AI technology into its curriculum and its focus on fostering an environment of inquiry and design thinking are precisely what we consider essential for a forward-looking education system.

Taino CoLAB Academy, in partnership with LEAD CT, is set to become a cornerstone in New Haven for educational excellence and innovation. We are particularly impressed by their holistic approach to education, which we believe will prepare students exceptionally well for both academic and life challenges.

In light of our shared goals, the New Haven Fire Fighters Association, is eager to explore potential collaborations with Taino CoLAB Academy to further enhance the educational opportunities for our community's youth and bring forth training and career opportunities to work within the New Haven Fire Department. Having local residents serve as the community's emergency responders boosts the city's moral and civic engagement which ultimately helps in the preservation of life by providing life rescue services.

We strongly support the approval of their charter school and are excited by the numerous possibilities our partnership could bring to the students and the broader community.
Thank you for your consideration of this transformative educational proposal. We look forward to contributing to this project and seeing its positive outcomes unfold.

With best wishes,

Fernando Ramirez
NewHavenHFFA@gmail.com
(203) 509-6222

ARTE Inc.

26 Atwater St. New Haven, CT 06513 203-804-9175 www.arte-inc.com

May 14, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

It is with great pleasure that I, on behalf of ARTE, Inc., extend our strong support for the establishment of the Taino CoLAB Academy High School in New Haven. This initiative represents a pioneering approach to education that emphasizes AI-enhanced learning and deep community engagement.

Taino CoLAB Academy's vision for a curriculum that blends Caribbean, Central, North, and South American culture, technological innovation with critical thinking and creativity is a perfect match for our objectives in educational reform. Their strategic partnership with LEAD CT will undoubtedly foster a nurturing environment for academic and personal growth within the student body.

We are excited about the possibility of partnering with Taino CoLAB Academy to support and amplify their efforts in transforming education in New Haven. We believe that our collaborative initiatives could serve as a model for future educational endeavors dedicated to promoting Latino, Art, Culture, and Education to the students and their families.

We respectfully urge your swift approval of Taino CoLAB Academy's charter, as it promises to be a significant asset to the New Haven educational landscape. Thank you for considering our endorsement and the potential for a productive partnership.

Respectfully,

David S. Greco
Co-Founder/Director
Arteinc@comcast.net

LULAC Head Start Inc.
DEVELOPING CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY FOR LIFE

LULACHeadStart.org
(203) 836-5850

Mr. Janic Maysonet, MBA
Family & Community Partnership Manager
LULAC Head Start, Inc.
250 Cedar Street, New Haven, CT 06519
www.lulacheadstart.org

May 15, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express LULAC Head Start, Inc.'s enthusiastic support for the charter application of Taino CoLAB Academy High School in New Haven. As advocates for innovative educational models, we find Taino CoLAB's approach to leveraging AI and personalized learning as groundbreaking.

The academy's commitment to nurturing leadership and creative skills among students, coupled with its partnership with LEAD CT, aligns with our vision of education as a tool for community empowerment and individual success.

We are particularly interested in exploring ways to partner with Taino CoLAB Academy to further enrich the educational experience of students. We believe that our involvement could help extend the reach and deepen the impact of the academy's innovative programs.

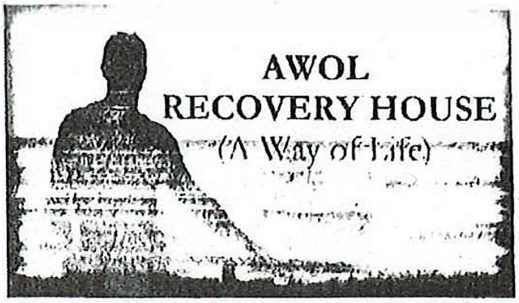
We urge the State Education Commission to approve this important educational initiative, which promises to reshape the educational experience in New Haven and beyond.

Thank you for considering our support for this exciting endeavor. We are hopeful for the opportunity to collaborate on this transformative project.

Kind regards,

Janic Maysonet

Mr. Janic Maysonet, MBA
Family & Community Partnership Manager
(p) 203-836-5835
(c) 203-836-0969



May 26, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

On behalf of AWOL, I am delighted to advocate for the charter approval of Taino CoLAB Academy High School. This school's commitment to integrating cutting edge AI technology into its curriculum and its focus on fostering an environment of inquiry and design thinking are precisely what we consider essential for a forward-looking education system.

Taino CoLAB Academy, in partnership with LEAD CT, is set to become a cornerstone in New Haven for educational excellence and innovation. We are particularly impressed by their holistic approach to education, which we believe will prepare students exceptionally well for both academic and life challenges.

In light of our shared goals, AWOL is eager to explore potential collaborations with Taino CoLab Academy to further enhance the educational opportunities for our community's youth.

We strongly support the approval of their charter and are excited by the numerous possibilities our partnership could bring to the students and the broader community.

Thank you for your consideration of this transformative education proposal. We look forward to contributing to this and seeing its positive outcomes unfold.

Darrell Brake
President/Owner

darrell@awolrecoveryhouse.com
(203) 996-6055

newhavenyouthsoccer
El Fútbol Juvenil de New Haven

May 21, 2024
Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Blvd
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker

New Haven Youth Soccer submits this letter to you in hopes to reinforce our commitment to the youth with a continued partnership with LEAD and as such am delighted to represent over 400 New Haven children and 50 New Haven adults in advocating for the charter approval of Taino CoLAB Academy High School.

NHYS, for the first time in several years, was able to successfully offer programming for players, ages 4-19 in every season (including summer and winter). This was accomplished through active participation with several New Haven offices and departments, one being LEAD CT. Taino CoLAB Academy, In partnership with LEAD CT, is set to become a cornerstone in New Haven for educational excellence and innovation. We are particularly impressed with their holistic approach to education, which will certainly pave the way for success in both life, physical education and academic obstacles children ultimately face.

New Haven is a grandiose community largely determined by where we live, work and play. For our community to thrive, we need to have an opportunity for the children to have an outlet for inclusion, mentoring and self-awareness. Thanks to our shared goals, New Haven Youth Soccer is eager to collaborate with Taino CoLAB Academy to further enhance the educational opportunities of our youth.

We strongly support the approval of their charter and are excited about the numerous possibilities and expanded partnership which will help provide us with the infrastructure to help our children live, learn and grow.

On behalf of the kids, we thank you for your leadership and support.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at admin@nhys.soccer or call 203-675-0196.

Sincerely,
Michael W. Galbicsek
Digitally signed by Michael W. Galbicsek
Date: 2024.05.21 15:19:51 -04'00'

Michael Galbicsek, Executive Director
New Haven Youth Soccer
www.nhys.soccer

Fair Haven
Community Health Care

June 14, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

It is with profound enthusiasm that Fair Haven Community Health Care (FHCHC) formally endorses the application for the establishment of Taino CoLAB Academy High School. This institution's innovative approach—melding advanced AI technology with culturally enriched curricula—underscores its commitment to fostering a learning environment that stimulates inquiry and cultivates design thinking, elements we consider essential for a forward-thinking educational system.

Taino CoLAB Academy, through its strategic alliance with CT LEAD, is poised to emerge as a bastion of educational excellence within New Haven. We are particularly captivated by their holistic educational strategy, which is meticulously designed to equip students for both academic prowess and the diverse challenges of life.

Moreover, Fair Haven Community Health Care is eager to explore a collaborative partnership with Taino CoLAB Academy, aimed at bolstering both the behavioral and physical health of its student body. We are intent on establishing a School Based Health Center (SBHC) that would position FHCHC staff onsite, dedicated to addressing the comprehensive medical needs of the students.

FHCHC was founded 53 years ago with the purpose of serving the largely Hispanic population of the Fair Haven neighborhood within New Haven CT. Today FHCHC serves over 34,000 individuals annually, providing primary care, behavioral health, and dental services. FHCHC has literally decades of experience in running school based health centers, having established the first SBHC in the country, at Wilbur Cross HS in the 1980s. Today, FHCHC runs SBHC in 12 schools throughout the greater New Haven area and we are eager to replicate our high quality program at Taino CoLAB Academy.

Our advocacy for the approval of this pioneering educational endeavor is unwavering. We are enthusiastic about the expansive opportunities our collaboration could unlock for the wider community. As a committed community ally, we uphold the principle that high-quality medical care should be universally accessible, irrespective of financial circumstances. In alignment with this ethos, we are committed to enhancing the health and social well-being of the children we serve by providing equitable, patient-centered care that is culturally attuned.

This commitment is a continuation of our foundational work initiated under the auspices of the Alliance for Latin American Progress, a leading community advocacy organization. Together with LEAD (Latinos for Educational Advocacy and Diversity), we are dedicated to making a lasting impact on lives.

We thank you for considering this transformative educational proposal. FHCHC looks forward to an active participation in this project and to the fruition of the positive changes it is poised to bring.

With sincere regards,

Suzanne Lagarde MD

Suzanne Lagarde, MD, MBA, FACP
Chief Executive Officer
s.lagarde@fhchc.org

Locations

374 Grand Avenue
New Haven, CT 06513

50 Grand Avenue
New Haven, CT 06513

190 Sargent Drive
New Haven, CT 06511
203.772.7411

Bella Vista
[illegible]
New Haven, CT 06513
203.777.7411

Riverview Family Health Care
371 West Main Street
Branford, CT 06405
203.671.4182

MAAS
426 East Street
New Haven, CT 06511
203.495.7710

GHcare
44 Sycamore Way
Branford, CT 06405
203.483.2630

New Haven School Based Health Centers

Canton Avenue School
Celia Hazen Kell School
Joan S. Martinez School
Wilbur Cross High School
Family Academy of Exploration
Sidney Woods Architecture & Design Magnet School
Roots Woodward School
Metropolitan Business Academy

East Haven School Based Health Centers

Joseph Melillo Middle School
East Haven High School

Branford School Based Health Centers

John B. Sliney School
Mary Tisko School

fhchc.org

Arts for Learning Connecticut

Affiliated with the national Young Audiences Arts for Learning network

June 20, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

It is with profound enthusiasm that Arts for Learning Connecticut formally endorses the application for the establishment of Taino CoLAB Academy High School. This institution's innovative approach—melding advanced AI technology with culturally enriched curricula—underscores its commitment to fostering a learning environment that stimulates inquiry and cultivates design thinking, elements we consider essential for a forward-thinking educational system.

Taino CoLAB Academy, through its strategic alliance with CT LEAD, is poised to emerge as a bastion of educational excellence within New Haven. We are particularly captivated by their holistic educational strategy, which is meticulously designed to equip students for both academic prowess and the diverse challenges of life.

Moreover, Arts for Learning Connecticut is eager to explore a collaborative partnership with Taino CoLAB Academy, aimed at enriching school culture, improving student engagement, and expanding teacher practice by being grounded in Social and Emotional Learning, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Multiple Intelligences Theory.

We are enthusiastic about the expansive opportunities our collaboration could unlock for the wider community to include character education, environmental awareness, health and nutrition, language arts/literacy, social studies, STEM and more. We thank you for considering this transformative educational proposal. Arts for Learning Connecticut looks forward to an active participation in this project and to the fruition of the positive changes it is poised to bring.

Sincerely,

John-Michael Parker
Executive Director
Arts for Learning Connecticut
203-230-8101
jmparker@aflct.org

your life your goals
our purpose

Wayne Valaitis
Women and Families Center
169 Colony Street
Meriden, CT 06451-3226

May 16, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

On behalf of the Women and Families Center, I am delighted to advocate for the charter approval of Taino CoLAB Academy High School. This school's commitment to integrating cutting-edge AI technology into its curriculum and its focus on fostering an environment of inquiry and design thinking are precisely what we consider essential for a forward-looking education system.

The academy's commitment to nurturing leadership and creative skills among students, coupled with its partnership with LEAD CT, aligns with our vision of education as a tool for community empowerment and individual success. We are particularly impressed by their holistic approach to education, which we believe will prepare students exceptionally well for both academic and life challenges.

In light of our shared goals, the Women and Families Center is particularly interested in exploring ways to partner with Taino CoLAB Academy to further enrich the educational experience of students. We believe that our involvement could help extend the reach and deepen the impact of the academy's innovative programs.

We urge the State Education Commission to approve this important educational initiative, which promises to reshape the educational experience in New Haven and beyond.

Thank you for considering our support for this exciting endeavor. We are hopeful for the opportunity to collaborate on this transformative project and seeing its positive outcomes unfold.

Kind regards,

Wayne Valaitis
Chief Executive Officer

Rev. Abraham Hernandez
National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference
234 Coe Ave.
East Haven, CT 06512

April 3, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Dr. Commissioner's Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of Taino CoLAB Academy High School in New Haven, CT. As a lifelong city resident and Executive Director of NHCLC CT, I am deeply committed to advancing educational opportunities that are innovative, inclusive, and aligned with the future needs of our students and community.

Taino CoLAB Academy High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices, personalized learning pathways, and a curriculum focused on inquiry, design, creativity, and leadership directly addresses the evolving landscape of education and workforce preparedness. Their partnership with LEAD CT and emphasis on community collaboration ensure the proposed school will be a valuable asset to New Haven, promoting academic excellence and cultural understanding.

I believe the Taino CoLAB Academy High School will make a significant difference in the lives of students by providing them with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Therefore, I respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Rev. Abraham Hernandez
NHCLC Executive Director
abrahamhernandez@nhclc.org

Cally Patten Murphy
A Better Life Homecare
Community Outreach Director
1 Circular Ave., Hamden CT

4/2/2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Dr. Commissioner's Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of Taino CoLAB Academy High School in New Haven, CT. As A Better Life Homecare Outreach Director, I am deeply committed to advancing educational opportunities that are innovative, inclusive, and aligned with the future needs of our students and community.

Taino CoLAB Academy High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices, personalized learning pathways, and a curriculum focused on inquiry, design, creativity, and leadership directly addresses the evolving landscape of education and workforce preparedness. Their partnership with LEAD CT and emphasis on community collaboration ensure the proposed school will be a valuable asset to New Haven, promoting academic excellence and cultural understanding.

I believe the Taino CoLAB Academy High School will make a significant difference in the lives of students by providing them with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Therefore, I respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Cally Patten Murphy

cpatten@ablhomecare.com

BREGAMOS COMMUNITY THEATER

315 Peck St | New Haven, CT 06513 | (718) 839 0886
www.breamostheater.org | bregamostheater@aol.com

March 20, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Dr. Commissioner's Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of Taino CoLAB Academy High School in New Haven, CT. As President / Founder of Bregamos Community Theater, I am deeply committed to advancing the educational, social, cultural, political and economic environment of our community. I believe the proposed Taino CoLAB Academy can help ensure the advancement of the health and well-being of the New Haven and the greater New Haven Community.

Taino CoLAB Academy High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices, personalized learning pathways, and a curriculum focused on inquiry, design, creativity, and leadership directly addresses the evolving landscape of education and workforce preparedness. Their partnership with LEAD CT and emphasis on community collaboration ensure the proposed school will be a valuable asset to New Haven, promoting academic excellence and cultural understanding.

I believe the Taino CoLAB Academy High School will make a significant difference in the lives of students by providing them with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Therefore, I respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education In Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Rafael Ramos
President/Founder

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
CONNECTICUT YANKEE COUNCIL

Connecticut Yankee Council, Boy Scouts of America
60 Wellington Road
Milford, CT 06461

April 3, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Dr. Commissioner's Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of Taino CoLAB Academy High School in New Haven, CT. As CEO of the Connecticut Yankee Council, I am deeply committed to advancing educational opportunities that are innovative, inclusive, and aligned with the future needs of our students and community.

Taino CoLAB Academy High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices, personalized learning pathways, and a curriculum focused on inquiry, design, creativity, and leadership directly addresses the evolving landscape of education and workforce preparedness. Their partnership with LEAD CT and emphasis on community collaboration ensure the proposed school will be a valuable asset to New Haven, promoting academic excellence and cultural understanding.

I believe the Taino CoLAB Academy High School will make a significant difference in the lives of students by providing them with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Therefore, I respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Mark Kraus, Scout Executive / CEO
Connecticut Yankee Council
Mark.kraus@scouting.org

A Better Life™
Homecare

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker

State Department of Education

450 Columbus Boulevard

Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to share my enthusiastic support for the establishment of Taino CoLAB High School in Waterbury, CT. As the Business Director of A Better Life Homecare in Wethersfield, CT, our commitment to community engagement and empowerment is at the heart of what we do.

Taino CoLAB High School's innovative approach, focusing on AI-augmented education and personalized learning, resonates deeply with my belief in fostering independence and enhancing care. The school's emphasis on creativity, leadership, and addressing the needs of a diverse, multilingual community is particularly inspiring.

Personally, I see immense potential for collaboration between our organization and Taino CoLAB High School. Providing students with opportunities to volunteer, develop leadership skills, and engage with the community is something I am very passionate about.

I wholeheartedly urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application. Thank you for considering this request and for your commitment to advancing education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

William Mendoza

Business Director

A Better Life Homecare

899 Silas Deane Hway, 1N, Wethersfield, CT 06109
Tel 860-206-7975
Fax 860-206-3901
Homemaker Companion Agency CT Reg # HCA.0001793

The Arc
Waterbury

1929 East Main Street
Waterbury, CT 06705

T: 203-575-0707
F: 203-596-0400
Waterburyarc.org

Executive Director
Richard Kalczynski
President
Nick Ciccarelli
Vice President
Thomas V. Riley, Esq.
Secretary
Alyssa Choulnard
Treasurer
Michael Annenberg
Directors
Ann Begley
Anthony DiBona, Esq.
Joe McGrail
Linda A. Noujaim
Sean Fitzmaurice
Susan Coble
Trudy Segla
Clara Moriarty

WARC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Organization serving Over a dozen towns In the greater Waterbury area since 1952.

Our Tax-Exempt Number is: E-9369

Waterbury Arc

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker

State Department of Education

450 Columbus Boulevard

Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express my strong support for establishing Taino CoLAB High School in Waterbury, CT. As Director of Program Management at Waterbury Arc, I am dedicated to supporting adults with intellectual disabilities in achieving their full potential through innovative programs and services.

Taino CoLAB High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices and personalized learning pathways is particularly exciting. We see significant opportunities to explore collaborations that will enhance the educational and vocational experiences of our students, preparing them for a future where technology and cultural understanding are paramount.

I believe Taino CoLAB High School will be an invaluable asset to our community, providing students with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Therefore, I respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

Jillian Fabas-Smith
Director of Program Manager
Waterbury ARC, INC.
1929 East Main Street
Waterbury, CT 06705
t: 203.575.0707 |f: 203.596.0400 | www.waterburyarc.org

Consulado General de la República Dominicana en New York, EE.UU.

001852 MAY 29 2024

Commissioner
Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Dr. Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express my support for establishing Taino CoLab High School in Waterbury, CT. As Consul General of the Dominican Republic, I am deeply committed to advancing educational opportunities that are innovative and aligned with the future needs of our students and community.

Taino CoLab High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices, personalized learning pathways, and a curriculum focused on inquiry, design, creativity, and leadership directly addresses the evolving landscape of education and workforce preparedness. Their partnership with LEAD CT and emphasis on community collaboration ensure the proposed school will be a valuable asset to Waterbury, promoting academic excellence.

I believe Taino CoLab High School will make a significant difference in students' lives by providing them with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Therefore, I respectfully recommend that the State Education Commission consider the approval of their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

CONSULADO GENERAL DE LA REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA NEW YORK

Eligio Jáquez
Cónsul General

Pastor: Bishop Jose E. Rosa
Copastor: Rev. Elizabeth Rosa

HOUSE OF FORGIVENESS
CHRISTIAN CHURCH
WORLD HEADQUARTERS. WATERBURY, CT USA
THE CHURCH WHERE NO ONE FEELS LIKE A STRANGER

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

We are writing to express our strong support for the establishment of Taino CoLAB High School in Waterbury, CT. As leaders in the community, we believe that this innovative school will provide much-needed educational opportunities for our students and educators.

Taino CoLAB High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices and personalized learning pathways aligns with our mission to support the community. The school's focus on inquiry, design, creativity, and leadership will equip students with the skills necessary to thrive in a modern, technology-driven world.

We are open to exploring opportunities arising from the needs of the community of students and educators. We believe that Taino CoLAB High School will be a transformative addition to Waterbury, providing students with the skills, knowledge, and representation they need to succeed.

Therefore, we respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Bishop José E. Rosa

Bishop José E. Rosa

Rev. Elizabeth Rosa

Reverend Elizabeth Rosa

Tel: (203) 754-3471
Email: casa@casadelperdon.net
Iglesia Cristiana Casa del Perdon, Inc. Waterbury, CT

32 ½ Walnut St
P. O. Box 1891
Waterbury, CT 06722

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
CONNECTICUT YANKEE COUNCIL

May 30th, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of Taino CoLAB Academy High School in Waterbury, CT. As CEO of the Connecticut Yankee Council, I am deeply committed to advancing educational opportunities that are innovative, inclusive, and aligned with the future needs of our students and community.

Taino CoLAB Academy High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices, personalized learning pathways, and a curriculum focused on inquiry, design, creativity, and leadership directly addresses the evolving landscape of education and workforce preparedness. Their partnership with LEAD CT and emphasis on community collaboration ensure the proposed school will be a valuable asset to Waterbury, promoting academic excellence and cultural understanding.

I believe the Taino CoLAB Academy High School will make a significant difference in the lives of students by providing them with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Therefore, I respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Mark Kraus

Mark Kraus
Scout Executive / CEO

60 Wellington Road
P.O. Box 32
Milford, Connecticut 06460-0032
203-876-6868
www.ctyankee.org

Prepared. For Life.™

Pastor: Bishop Jose E. Rosa
Copastor: Rev. Elizabeth Rosa

HOUSE OF FORGIVENESS
CHRISTIAN CHURCH
WORLD HEADQUARTERS. WATERBURY, CT USA
THE CHURCH WHERE NO ONE FEELS LIKE A STRANGER

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

We are writing to express our strong support for the establishment of Taino CoLAB High School in Waterbury, CT. As leaders in the community, we believe that this innovative school will provide much-needed educational opportunities for our students and educators.

Taino CoLAB High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices and personalized learning pathways aligns with our mission to support the community. The school's focus on inquiry, design, creativity, and leadership will equip students with the skills necessary to thrive in a modern, technology-driven world.

We are open to exploring opportunities arising from the needs of the community of students and educators. We believe that Taino CoLAB High School will be a transformative addition to Waterbury, providing students with the skills, knowledge, and representation they need to succeed.

Therefore, we respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Bishop José E. Rosa

Bishop Jose E. Rosa

Rev. Elizabeth Rosa

Reverend Elizabeth Rosa

Tel: (203) 754-3471
Email: casa@casadelperdon.net
Iglesia Cristiana Casa del Perdon, Inc. Waterbury, CT
32 ½ Walnut St
P. O. Box 1891
Waterbury, CT 06722

Ministerio Puerta de Libertad

June 12, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of Taino CoLAB High School in Waterbury, CT. As a leader in the community, I believe that this innovative school will provide much-needed educational opportunities for our students and educators.

Taino CoLAB High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices and personalized learning pathways aligns with our mission to support the community. The school's focus on inquiry, design, creativity, and leadership will equip students with the skills necessary to thrive in a modern, technology-driven world.

We are open to exploring opportunities arising from the needs of the community of students and educators. We believe that Taino CoLAB High School will be a transformative addition to Waterbury, providing students with the skills, knowledge, and representation they need to succeed.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Guillermo Torres
Ministerio Puerta de Libertad
603 North Main St
Waterbury, CT 06704

Igleisa Casa Ebenezer
Tabernáculo de Oración

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of Taino CoLAB High School in Waterbury, CT. As a leader in the community, I believe that this innovative school will provide much-needed educational opportunities for our students and educators.

Taino CoLAB High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices and personalized learning pathways aligns with our mission to support the community. The school's focus on inquiry, design, creativity, and leadership will equip students with the skills necessary to thrive in a modern, technology-driven world.

We are open to exploring opportunities arising from the needs of the community of students and educators. We believe that Taino CoLAB High School will be a transformative addition to Waterbury, providing students with the skills, knowledge, and representation they need to succeed.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Yashira Fonseca
Casa Ebenezer
49 Leavenworth St
Waterbury, CT 06702

RIBA ASPIRA

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to voice my strong support for the establishment of Taino CoLAB High School in Waterbury, CT. As the Initiative Director of Riba Aspira. I am dedicated to supporting families and individuals in need through our various programs and services.

Riba Aspira's mission is to address the economic and racial/ethnic disparities that have plagued specific pockets within Waterbury's Communities. For this reason, we've tailored our approach and resources to addressing some of these issues and believe that the establishment of the Taino CoLAB will further assist in these efforts.

Taino CoLAB High School's focus on AI-augmented educational practices and personalized learning pathways offers a unique opportunity to enhance the educational landscape in our community. We are excited about potential collaborations that can help our clients, particularly those facing financial distress, access innovative and inclusive educational opportunities.

I firmly believe that Taino CoLAB High School will significantly benefit our community, and I respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your commitment to improving education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,
Tomas Olivo
Initiative Director
Riba Aspira
233 Mill St 3rd floor, Waterbury, CT 06706
(203) 527-6385

CENTRO COMUNITARIO DOMINICO-AMERICANO
ORGANIZACIÓN SIN FINES DE LUCRO
56 Brook side Ave, Naugatuck, CT. 06770, USA. 203-490-5328
Fundado el 1ro de Marzo del año 2020.
Corr ID: 2000039388288

December 20, 2024.
Felicia Canty, Commssioner of Education.
Charter School Office, State Department of Education
Hartford, Connecticut. USA.

Dear Canty:

We are the board of directors of the Dominican American Community Center (CECODA), a non-profit organization that operates in the city of Waterbury and surrounding areas, and that works for the education and culture of youth and the Latino community in the state of Connecticut.
Through this letter we address you, with the purpose of expressing and requesting the following:
FIRST: We support the request of Taino Colab, for the approval of its creation as a High School, in the city of Waterbury, which has the purpose of offering a quality and technological education, for the well-being and development of youth and adolescents, in addition to the objective of empowering students, so that they are innovators, leaders, thinkers, critics and agents of change for a better society.

SECOND: We ask that the request submitted by the Taino Colab Project be accepted as good and valid, for the approval of the aforementioned school.
Sincerely,
The Board of Directors of CECODA

Julio Cesar Disla
President

Annex: Letter in Spanish

12 de marzo de 2024

Comisionada Charlene Russell-Tucker
Departamento de Educación del Estado
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Estimada Comisionada Russell-Tucker,

Le escribo para expresar mi firme apoyo a la creación de la Taino CoLAB High School en Waterbury, CT. Como presidente, estoy profundamente comprometido con el avance de oportunidades educativas que sean innovadoras, inclusivas y alineadas con las futuras necesidades de nuestros estudiantes y la comunidad.

La visión de Taino CoLAB High School de integrar prácticas educativas aumentadas por IA, rutas de aprendizaje personalizadas y un currículo enfocado en la investigación, el diseño, la creatividad y el liderazgo aborda directamente el panorama evolutivo de la educación y la preparación para el trabajo. Su asociación con LEAD CT y su énfasis en la colaboración comunitaria aseguran que la escuela propuesta será un valioso recurso para Waterbury, promoviendo la excelencia académica y el entendimiento cultural.

Creo que Taíno CoLAB High School hará una diferencia significativa en la vida de los estudiantes al proporcionarles las habilidades, conocimientos y experiencias necesarias para prosperar en un mundo que cambia rápidamente. Por lo tanto, respetuosamente insto a la Comisión de Educación del Estado a aprobar su solicitud de charter.

Gracias por considerar esta solicitud y por su continuo compromiso con el mejoramiento de la educación en Connecticut.

Atentamente,

Julio Disla
Presidente del Centro Comunitario Dominico-Americano (CECODA)
Waterbury, Connecticut
Email: cecodainc@gmail.com

Annex: Letter in Spanish

12 de marzo de 2024

Comisionada Charlene Russell-Tucker
Departamento de Educación del Estado
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Estimada Comisionada Russell-Tucker,

Le escribo para expresar mi firme apoyo a la creación de la Taino CoLAB High School en Waterbury, CT. Como presidente, estoy profundamente comprometido con el avance de oportunidades educativas que sean innovadoras, inclusivas y alineadas con las futuras necesidades de nuestros estudiantes y la comunidad.

La visión de Taino CoLAB High School de integrar prácticas educativas aumentadas por IA, rutas de aprendizaje personalizadas y un currículo enfocado en la investigación, el diseño, la creatividad y el liderazgo aborda directamente el panorama evolutivo de la educación y la preparación para el trabajo. Su asociación con LEAD CT y su énfasis en la colaboración comunitaria aseguran que la escuela propuesta será un valioso recurso para Waterbury, promoviendo la excelencia académica y el entendimiento cultural.

Creo que Taino CoLAB High School hará una diferencia significativa en la vida de los estudiantes al proporcionarles las habilidades, conocimientos y experiencias necesarias para prosperar en un mundo que cambia rápidamente. Por lo tanto, respetuosamente insto a la Comisión de Educación del Estado a aprobar su solicitud de charter.

Gracias por considerar esta solicitud y por su continuo compromiso con el mejoramiento de la educación en Connecticut.

Atentamente,

Julio Disla
Presidente del Centro Comunitario Dominico-Americano (CECODA)
Waterbury, Connecticut
Email: cecodainc@gmail.com

Consulado General de la República Dominicana en New York, EE.UU.

001862 MAY 29 2024

Commissioner
Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Dr. Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express my support for establishing Taino CoLab High School in Waterbury, CT. As Consul General of the Dominican Republic, I am deeply committed to advancing educational opportunities that are innovative and aligned with the future needs of our students and community.

Taino CoLab High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices, personalized learning pathways, and a curriculum focused on inquiry, design, creativity, and leadership directly addresses the evolving landscape of education and workforce preparedness. Their partnership with LEAD CT and emphasis on community collaboration ensure the proposed school will be a valuable asset to Waterbury, promoting academic excellence.

I believe Taino CoLab High School will make a significant difference in students' lives by providing them with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Therefore, I respectfully recommend that the State Education Commission consider the approval of their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

CONSULADO GENERAL DE LA REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA NEW YORK

Eligio Jaquez
Cónsul General

The Arc
Waterbury

1929 East Main Street
Waterbury, CT 06705

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F: 203-596-0400
Waterburyarc.org

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Richard Kalczuski
President
Thomas V. Riley, Esq.
Vice President
Nick Ciccarelli
Secretary
Alyssa Chouinard
Treasurer
Michael Annenberg
Directors
Ann Begley
Anthony DiBona, Esq.
Joe McGrail
Linda A. Noujaim
Sean Fitzmaurice
Susan Cable
Trudy Segla
Clara Moriarty

WARC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Organization serving Over a dozen towns In the greater Waterbury area since 1952. Our Tax-Exempt Number is: E-9369

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the establishment of Taino CoLAB High School in Waterbury, CT. In my role as Program Manager at Waterbury Arc and as Secretary of the Board of Education, I am deeply committed to enhancing educational opportunities that reflect our community's diverse needs and foster an inclusive environment.

Taino CoLAB High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices and personalized learning pathways is particularly exciting. It promises to address the need for more representation within the school system, ensuring that the voices and experiences of our multilingual families are heard and valued. This focus on diversity and cultural understanding is crucial for preparing our students to thrive in a global society.

We see significant opportunities to explore collaborations that will enhance the educational and vocational experiences of our students, especially those with intellectual disabilities, by equipping them with the skills necessary for a future where technology and cultural competence are paramount.

I believe Taino CoLAB High School will be an invaluable asset to our community, providing students with the skills, knowledge, and representation they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Therefore, I respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Drake

Program Manager, Waterbury Arc
Senior tutor to the Homeless, Board of Education

7

[Your Name and/or Organization's letterhead] Natasha Sylvia Russ
[Your Title/Organization] Realtor / Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices
[Your Address] 920 Old Towne Rd Cheshire, CT 06410

[Date] 04/05/24

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Dr. Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

I am writing to express my strong support for establishing Taino CoLAB High School in Waterbury, CT. As [Your Title/Organization], I am deeply committed to advancing educational opportunities that are innovative, inclusive, and aligned with the future needs of our students and community.

Taino CoLAB High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices, personalized learning pathways, and a curriculum focused on inquiry, design, creativity, and leadership directly addresses the evolving landscape of education and workforce preparedness. Their partnership with LEAD CT and emphasis on community collaboration ensure the proposed school will be a valuable asset to Waterbury, promoting academic excellence and cultural understanding.

I believe Taino CoLAB High School will make a significant difference in students' lives by providing them with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Therefore, I respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,
[Your Name] Natasha Sylvia Russ
[Your Signature, if sending by mail] Natasha Sylvia Russ
[Your Contact Information] 203-808-5555
SylviaNatashaRuss@bhhsne.com

8

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker State Department of Education

As the owner of Mi casita de colores Daycare

Locate at: 196 New haven ave. in Waterbury Ct.

I am writing to wholeheartedly support the establishment of Taino CoLAB Academy High School. The innovative educational model they propose, which integrates advanced technologies and customized learning paths, represents a significant advancement in our educational system.

Taino CoLAB Academy's dedication to nurturing leadership, creativity, and design thinking will provide our students with the tools they need to succeed in an ever-evolving world. This school has the potential to become a beacon of progressive education in our community, inspiring future generations.

I urge you to approve this critical educational initiative, as it will have a lasting positive impact on our students and the broader community.

Thank you for your commitment to advancing our state's educational goals.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name: Netalidia Bautista

Email:

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Attachment F

State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE GERALDO REYES, JR.
DEPUTY SPEAKER
PAST CHAIR, BLACK & PUERTO RICAN CAUCUS
75TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8585
TOLL FREE: (800) 842-8267

COMMITTEES

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

December 18, 2024

Introduction:
Good evening, members of the State Board of Education, community leaders, and attendees. My name is State Representative Geraldo Reyes, and I proudly represent the people of 75th District and Waterbury. I am here today to speak in strong support of establishing the Taino Academy in Waterbury.

Cultural Preservation:
The history and heritage of the Taíno people run deeply through the roots of our community. However, this legacy risks being forgotten if we do not actively preserve and celebrate it. The Taino Academy offers a unique opportunity to teach students about their cultural heritage while preparing them for academic success. That said all the specifics involving Taino legacy/cultural agenda to be sorted out, as there are many issues and opinions of how best to expand on this cultural experience. One approach is establishing a relationship with Tainos in Puerto Rico and as I said there are many options on how to address this important culture as it's clearly not one size fits all. This dual mission will create a generation of leaders who know where they come from and are empowered to shape where they are going.

Educational Choice:
Education is the foundation of opportunity, and parents deserve the ability to choose the best educational path for their children. Taino Academy will expand educational options for families in Waterbury by offering a culturally inclusive, high-quality learning environment. This school will provide academic excellence alongside cultural identity—a combination that is not just valuable but essential.

A Call for Support:
Our community has shown resounding support for this initiative, recognizing the power of educational choice and cultural preservation. Approving Taino Academy means opening new doors for students while honoring the cultural richness that makes Waterbury such a unique place.

Call to Action:
I respectfully urge the State Board of Education to approve the charter application for Taino Academy. This decision is an investment in our community's future—one where cultural pride and academic excellence walk hand in hand.

Closing:
Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration. Together, we can ensure that Waterbury's children receive an education that not only prepares them academically but also connects them to the cultural stories that define who they are. We stand on the shoulders of an amazing people & legacy, now we need to share that knowledge with the upcoming generations.

Sincerely,

Geraldo Reyes Jr.
75th District Waterbury

State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

March 6, 2024

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Dr. Commissioner Russell-Tucker,

We are writing to express our strong support for establishing Taino CoLAB High School in Waterbury, CT. As a State Representatives, we are deeply committed to advancing educational opportunities that are innovative, inclusive, and aligned with the future needs of our students and community.

Taino CoLAB High School's vision to integrate AI-augmented educational practices, personalized learning pathways, and a curriculum focused on inquiry, design, creativity, and leadership directly addresses the evolving landscape of education and workforce preparedness. Their partnership with LEAD CT and emphasis on community collaboration ensure the proposed school will be a valuable asset to Waterbury, promoting academic excellence and cultural understanding.

We believe Taino CoLAB High School will make a significant difference in students' lives by providing them with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Therefore, we respectfully urge the State Education Commission to approve their charter application.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing commitment to enhancing education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Christopher Rosario
State Representative

Juan Candelaria
State Representative

James Sánchez
State Representative

Robert Sánchez
State Representative

Minnie Gonzalez
State Representative

Manny Sánchez
State Representative

Julio Concepción
State Representative

Geraldo Reyes
State Representative