

VII.C.

Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

To Be Proposed:

April 6, 2022

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of Great Oaks Charter School-Bridgeport from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2024, subject to the Commissioner's April 6, 2022, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____, this sixth day of April, Two Thousand Twenty-Two.

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: April 6, 2022

SUBJECT: Renewal of State Charter–Great Oaks Charter School, Bridgeport

Executive Summary

Introduction

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

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

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

History/Background

Great Oaks Charter School (Great Oaks) opened in the fall of 2014. The latest CSDE audited student enrollment data from 2020-21 reported 670 students in Grades 6-12 with 99.0 percent residing in Bridgeport (the host district), and the remaining 1.0 percent of students coming from 5 area towns. Great Oaks has a maximum approved student enrollment of 661 seats serving Grades 6-12 in fiscal year 2022-23. Table 1, on page 16, of the attached Charter Renewal Report provides 2020-21 student enrollment and demographic data. Seventy percent of Great Oaks students qualify for free or reduced-price meals and 17.9 percent of the students receive special education services. The mission of Great Oaks is to “prepare students for college success through high-dosage tutoring, quality instruction, and a focus on career and college readiness.”

Charter Renewal Process

Application for Renewal of Charter: The CSDE accepted an application for the renewal of Great Oaks charter on November 1, 2021. The application detailed the charter school’s progress, operations, and achievement in relation to the CSDE’s charter school performance standards: (a) school performance; (b) stewardship, governance, and management; (c) student population; and (d) legal compliance. Great Oaks submitted data and evidence to substantiate the charter school’s written responses.

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

Renewal Site Visit: On January 11, 2022, the CSDE renewal team conducted an onsite visit at Great Oaks. The purpose of the onsite visit was to observe Great Oaks programs, policies, practices, and procedures to assess their efficacy and fidelity to the school’s charter and aligned operating systems. Evidence was collected through the onsite visit observations, document reviews, interviews, and focus groups. The team spoke with board members, administrators, staff, students, parents, and community members. The team used this process to ensure that the school is functioning in compliance with the law and the school’s mission. The team verified the responses detailed in the renewal application regarding compliance with the law and the CSDE’s performance framework and accountability plan.

Invitation for Written Comment: The CSDE solicited written comments on the renewal of Great Oaks Charter School from the Superintendent of Bridgeport Public Schools (BPS) and from contiguous school districts: Fairfield, Stratford, and Trumbull. The CSDE did not receive any responses to the solicitation.

Public Hearing: Martha Prou, member of the SBE, and the CSDE staff held a public hearing on January 25, 2022, in the city of Bridgeport, and heard from individuals on the potential charter renewal of Great Oaks and the impact it is having on the community. Public hearing participants included members of the Great Oaks community, including family members, students, school staff, and community members. Over 76 people attended the public hearing. Thirty-six individuals offered testimony supporting the school's efforts and the renewal of the charter. No one spoke out against the renewal of the school's charter.

Review of Documents and Site Visit Findings

The most recent available data and information contained in the Charter Renewal Report and the state student data (beginning on page 9) indicates Great Oaks' performance according to the four performance standards. The report highlights school strengths and areas for continued growth.

Special Considerations and Analyses Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

When viewing and interpreting the results for summative assessments administered in 2020-21 in comparison to 2018-19 and earlier exam administrations, it is important to note the similarities and differences. While the 2020-21 assessments used the same test blueprint, item bank, test forms, and in-person testing protocols as in 2018-19, there were many marked differences:

- schools were fully remote from mid-March to mid-June 2020;
- in March 2020, Connecticut received a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) to be exempt from both administering state academic assessments in 2019-20 and holding schools and districts accountable using the Next Generation Accountability System;
- in 2020-21, school learning models changed throughout the school year and students were remote to varying degrees due to factors beyond educator control;
- in 2020-21, some students tested remotely, which was a new construct;
- in-person school changed including the emergence of new instructional approaches such as concurrent teaching;
- students and educators expressed increased feelings of stress, anxiety, and trauma;
- in 2020-21, Connecticut secured a waiver from the USDOE to be exempted from implementing the Next Generation Accountability System for schools and districts; and while districts made their best effort to assess as many students as possible, there was not a requirement to test at least 95 percent of students as in past years.

Considering these differences, and to best support the use of 2020-21 assessment results to inform the charter renewal process in 2022, the CSDE conducted specialized analyses for Smarter Balanced Assessments.

- The CSDE used "matched cohort growth" (i.e., growth of same students from one grade to another) when feasible to evaluate how growth during the pandemic was different from growth before the pandemic.
- All results are disaggregated by a student's learning model: in-person (more than 75 percent of days in-person); hybrid (between 25 percent and 75 percent of days in-person); or remote (less than 25 percent of days in-person). At Great Oaks, about 57 percent of students in Grades 6-8 learned remotely during 2020-21; the remaining 43 percent of students learned in a hybrid format.
- In most cases, only those scores from students who tested in-person were included.

Strengths Include

- A review of the school's chronic absenteeism of 23.4 percent in 2018-19, 16.5 percent in 2019-20, and 6.4 percent in 2020-21 have trended down, outperforming the host district of 28.9 percent and the state average of 19.0 percent in 2020-21. It is important that the school continue to use its systems and supports to identify students and families with attendance issues, determine root causes, and provide supports and resources to address barriers that negatively affect student attendance.
- No significant findings, conditions, or internal weaknesses were uncovered in Great Oaks' most recent certified financial audit.
- Overall, the student body reflects the demographics of the surrounding community.
- The school demonstrates strong community support as evidenced by testimony provided by individuals at the public hearing and interviews with parents and students during the site visit.
- School website and Governing Board documents demonstrate that the Governing Board meetings are open and accessible to the public.

Areas for Continued Growth

- Among hybrid students in Grades 6-8 who had a prior ELA score in 2018-19 (N=121), their ELA proficiency rate decreased from 23.1 percent in 2018-19 to 18.2 percent in 2020-21. Among matched remote students, even when results of in-person and remotely taken tests were combined (N=169), proficiency rates declined from 16.6 percent in 2018-19 to 15.4 percent in 2020-21. Prior to the pandemic, a similar matched student analysis from 2016-17 and 2018-19 (N=298) revealed that the ELA proficiency rate increased slightly from 17.3 percent in 2016-17 to 19.8 percent in 2018-19.
- Among hybrid students in Grades 6-8 who had a prior math score in 2018-19 (N=113), their math proficiency rate decreased from 13.3 percent in 2018-19 to 5.3 percent in 2020-21. Among matched remote students, even when results of in-person and remotely taken tests were combined (N=158), their proficiency rate decreased from 8.9 percent in 2018-19 to 7.0 percent in 2020-21. Prior to the pandemic, a similar matched student analysis from 2016-17 and 2018-19 (N=298) revealed that the proficiency rate increased slightly from 10.5 percent in 2016-17 to 11.7 percent in 2018-19.
- A review of the school's suspension rate, particularly its baseline pre-pandemic year, 2018-19 rate of 15.1 percent exceeds the host district by 2.9 percentage points and the state by 8.4 percent points. The school's 2019-20 suspension rate of 14.3 percent exceeds the host district by 4.9 percentage points and the state by 9.4 percent points. It is important that the school continue to develop its restorative approach to minimize student behavioral incidents resulting in suspensions and review its discipline processes to ensure they are equitable and fair across all students.
- Great Oaks' 2018-19 Discipline Tier Based on Suspension/Expulsion Data was Tier four. A Tier four designates a school with Consistently High Suspension Rates (may also have high disproportionality): Overall, black, or Hispanic suspension rate ≥ 15 percent. It is important that the school continue to develop its restorative approach to minimize student behavioral incidents resulting in suspensions and review its discipline policies and processes to ensure that they treat all students fairly.

- A review of Great Oaks' Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual (APPM) determined the APPM requires policy amendments concerning special education billing rate process, thresholds and signatories of checks and wire transfers, bank and credit card reviews and reconciliations, and payment authorizations.
- A review of the schools Board Policies and Procedures Manual (BPPM) determined that the BPPM requires policy amendments concerning evaluation of Executive Director.
- A review of Great Oaks' Multilingual learners/English learners (MLs/ELs) policies and procedures determined policy amendments concerning annual English language screening, professional development and family notifications are necessary. The school is working with members of the CSDE to develop required policy changes.
- Great Oaks is not in compliance with Teacher Certification statute. A review of Great Oaks' staff file of February 10, 2022, reports 85.7 percent of staff are in compliance with certification. It is the responsibility of the school to take steps to ensure that 100 percent of the staff holds appropriate certificates, permits, or authorizations for their positions. Current legislation requires that at least 50 percent of educators serving in a charter school must hold a valid certificate (Initial, Provisional, or Professional Certificate) and the remaining 50 percent may hold other interim certificates, temporary certificates, permits or authorizations. Of the 56 staff members requiring certification, 28 staff or 50 percent hold a valid certificate, and 20 staff or 35.7 percent hold other temporary certificates, permits or authorizations. The remaining 8 staff members or 14.3 percent have no active certification/permit on file and are out of compliance. Of the 50 percent allowed to serve under other certificates, permits or authorizations, legislation also allows for the issuance of a Charter School Educator Permit (CSEP) for no more than 30 percent of the educators serving in a charter school. Great Oaks currently has seven staff members or 12.5 percent holding CSEPs. Options to bring staff into compliance for certification, pending they met criteria for each option, include a Long-Term Substitute Certificate, a Durational Shortage Area permit (DSAP), a Temporary 90-Day Certificate, an Interim Educator Certificate or a Resident Educator Permit. It is the responsibility of the school to take steps to ensure that 100 percent of the staff holds appropriate certificates, permits, or authorizations for their positions.
- Great Oaks is not in compliance with the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program. Great Oaks does not have a current TEAM district support plan on file with the CSDE. The school does not have a trained reflection paper reviewer on staff. Minimal mentoring hours of staff with initial certificates have been logged as of February 10, 2022. Great Oaks is required to implement the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program with fidelity to the statutory requirements by ensuring 100 percent of beginning teachers complete the TEAM program by their completion deadline date (within three years of hire) to be eligible to advance their certificate.
- The school is in partial compliance with Educator Evaluation and Support Plan (EESP). At the time of the site visit, Great Oaks did not have a functioning Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC). The school is currently working to establish a PDEC and hold regular meetings. The school has an approved Educator Evaluation and Support Plan (2015-16) on file with the CSDE. However, the plan is outdated and is not aligned with the *CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017 (Guidelines 2017)*. As the Educator Evaluation and Support (EES) 2022 Council revises the *Guidelines 2017* this spring 2022, the school's PDEC will need to revise their current plan to be aligned with the new guidelines. Information for submitting a plan aligned to the new guidelines for the CSDE approval will be forthcoming.

Charter Renewal Recommendation

On March 6, 2019, Great Oaks received a two-year charter renewal. Conditions stated in the 2019 renewal required Great Oaks to develop corrective action plans to bring its staff into certification compliance, minimize behavioral incidents resulting in student suspensions, address chronic absenteeism, and include measures to improve student academic achievement. In addition, Great Oaks was required to submit regular data in these areas to the Turnaround Office and participate in relevant technical assistance. Since its last renewal, the school's chronic absenteeism has trended down over the last three years to 6.4 percent in 2020-21, well below the host district and state. The school is not in full compliance with Teacher Certification, Teams and EESP. The school's 2018-19 and 2020-21 suspension rates exceeded the host district and state and contributed to a Tier 4 Discipline designation as a school with Consistently High Suspension Rates with high disproportionality of black, or Hispanic student suspension rate ≥ 15 percent. Compared to statewide declines in proficiency rates during the pandemic for matched students who learned in a hybrid format (approximately six to seven percent in ELA and 16 to 17 percent in math) or in a remote format (approximately eight to nine percent in ELA and 18 to 19 percent in math), ELA achievement at Great Oaks declined for both hybrid and remote students and was unlike the pre-pandemic period when proficiency increased. The declines in math were unlike the pre-pandemic period when proficiency increased. Although the amount of decline in math, is not as large as those seen statewide, it should be noted that the 2018-19 proficiency rate for Great Oaks (8.9 percent for remote and 13.3 percent for hybrid students) was significantly lower than the state overall (around 27 percent for hybrid/remote high needs students). The low math achievement in 2020-21 (5-7 percent proficiency in Grades 5-8) is extremely concerning. Acknowledging that Great Oaks' performance indicators are not without weakness, the CSDE recommends that the SBE renew the school's charter for a period of two years, subject to the following conditions.

1. By May 9, 2022, Great Oaks shall submit a corrective action plan acceptable to the Commissioner. The corrective action plan must include strategies and action steps to improve student academic achievement. Additionally, Great Oaks must utilize the CSDE Acceleration Cycle as a framework for developing and implementing an improvement plan to address learning acceleration, learning recovery, and student enrichment because of the pandemic. The school must convene a team to develop and monitor the implementation of a plan that intentionally addresses unfinished learning while focusing on the teaching of prioritized, essential content, and maintaining a high level of rigor for all learners. Great Oaks shall submit to the CSDE, on a bi-monthly basis, beginning in October 2022, a report monitoring its year-to-date progress of improving student academic achievement. The plan shall be developed in consultation with the CSDE's Turnaround Office. Great Oaks shall implement the corrective actions within thirty days following the Commissioner's acceptance of the plan.

2. By May 9, 2022, Great Oaks shall submit a plan for the CSDE to review and approve to minimize behavioral incidents resulting in suspensions and by adopting a restorative discipline model for the school including: (a) pre-teaching and re-teaching expected behaviors; (b) isolating the root causes of behavioral issues; (c) identifying interventions to target root causes; (d) strengthening school discipline policies and procedures; (e) monitoring interventions and applying midcourse corrections, as necessary; (f) establishing suspension targets to ensure dramatic improvement; and (g) formulating detailed plans to engage school stakeholders, particularly parents, teachers and administrators in developing a corrective action plan that treats all students equitably and fairly. Additionally, Great Oaks shall submit its year-to-date number of suspensions, and the concentration of students with one or more suspension to the CSDE at the year-end of June 30, 2022, and on a bi-monthly basis beginning October 2022. The plan shall be developed in consultation with the CSDE's Turnaround Office. Great Oaks shall implement the corrective actions within thirty days following the Commissioner's acceptance of the plan.
3. In the spring of 2023, Great Oaks administrative staff will meet with the Accountability and Support Committee of the SBE and provide a status update of its corrective action plan to address student achievement and suspensions. The school will also provide an update of the school's compliance with Teacher Certification, the TEAM Program, and EESP.

The CSDE will notify Great Oaks of action taken by the SBE following its meeting on April 6, 2022. The school will be advised of relevant technical assistance opportunities designed to improve its educational program. The CSDE will conduct follow-up visits to ensure Great Oaks is addressing the issues raised in this memorandum.

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

Reviewed by: Lisa Lamenzo, Division Director
Turnaround Office

Approved by: Desi D. Nesmith, Deputy Commissioner

CHARTER RENEWAL REPORT | 2022

Charter School Information			
Charter School Name:	Great Oaks Charter School		
School Director/ Principal:	John Scalice		
School Board Chairperson:	Susan Briggs		
Location (City/Town):	Bridgeport		
Rating Key			
Meets	The school demonstrates effective policies and practices, resulting in positive outcomes.		
Pending Action	The school requires minor modifications to its policies and/or practices. The school is taking satisfactory measures to remedy and address these issues in a timely manner.		
Does Not Meet	The schools falls below performance expectations with significant concerns noted, which require immediate attention and intervention.		
Standard 1: School Performance Indicators		Points/Max	% Points Earned
Accountability Index:		506.4/1050	48.2
Notes and Evidence:			
Great Oaks Charter School (Great Oaks’) 2018-19 Accountability Index of 48.2 is 26.0 percentage points below the state school Accountability Index of 74.2 percent. Schools that meet Standard 1: are schools earning an accountability index from 85 to 100 (Category 1), schools earning an accountability index from 70 to 84.9 percent, (Category 2) and schools earning an accountability index of 69.9 percent or lower and have not been identified as a Turnaround or Focus School (Category 3). Great Oaks Accountability Index score of 48.2 percent places its performance in Category 3, which earns and does not meet for Standard 1. Great Oaks 2018-19 Next Generation Accountability Report is shown in detail on the next page.			

Next Generation Accountability, 2018-19-Great Oaks Academy (Grades: 6-12)
School Category 3

Indicator	Index/Rate	Target	Points Earned	Max Points	% Points Earned	State Average % Points Earned
1a. ELA Performance Index - All Students	52.3	75	34.8	50	69.7	90.2
1b. ELA Performance Index - High Needs Students	50.7	75	33.8	50	67.6	77.5
1c. Math Performance Index - All Students	43.1	75	28.8	50	57.5	84.1
1d. Math Performance Index - High Needs Students	41.2	75	27.4	50	54.9	70.2
1e. Science Performance Index - All Students	52.1	75	34.7	50	69.4	85.0
1f. Science Performance Index - High Needs Students	51.4	75	34.3	50	68.6	72.2
2a. ELA Academic Growth - All Students	58.3%	100%	58.3	100	58.3	59.9
2b. ELA Academic Growth - High Needs Students	55.6%	100%	55.6	100	55.6	55.1
2c. Math Academic Growth - All Students	40.5%	100%	40.5	100	40.5	62.5
2d. Math Academic Growth - High Needs Students	38.6%	100%	38.6	100	38.6	55.2
2e. Progress Toward English Proficiency - Literacy	52.1%	100%	26.0	50	52.1	60.0
2f. Progress Toward English Proficiency - Oral	32.3%	100%	16.2	50	32.3	52.1
4a. Chronic Absenteeism - All Students	23.4%	<=5%	13.2	50	26.4	78.3
4b. Chronic Absenteeism - High Needs Students	24.7%	<=5%	10.6	50	21.1	55.7
5. Preparation for CCR - Percent Taking Courses	.	75%	.	.	.	100.0
6. Preparation for CCR - Percent Passing Exams	.	75%	.	.	.	56.7
7. On-track to High School Graduation	24.4%	94%	13.0	50	26.0	93.6
8. 4-year Graduation: All Students (2018 Cohort)	.	94%	.	.	.	93.9
9. 6-year Graduation: High Needs Students (2016 Cohort)	.	94%	.	.	.	88.6
10. Postsecondary Entrance (Graduating Class 2018)	.	75%	.	.	.	94.5
11. Physical Fitness (estimated participation rate = 97.3%)	13.1%	75%	8.8	50	17.5	70.6
12. Arts Access	38.1%	60%	31.8	50	63.6	86.5
Accountability Index	.	.	506.4	1050	48.2	74.2

Gap Indicators

Indicator	Non-High Needs Rate	High Needs Rate	Size of Gap	State Gap Mean +1 Stdev	Is Gap an Outlier?
ELA Performance Index Gap	60.2	50.7	9.5	15.3	N
Math Performance Index Gap	52.9	41.2	11.8	17.4	N
Science Performance Index Gap	.	51.4	.	16.3	
Graduation Rate Gap (2016 Cohort)	

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

Assessment Participation Rates

Indicator	Participation Rate (%)
ELA - All Students	98.7
ELA - High Needs Students	98.8
Math - All Students	98.7
Math - High Needs Students	98.8
Science - All Students	98.9
Science - High Needs Students	98.6

Minimum participation standard is 95%.

Standard 2: Stewardship, Governance and Management Indicators:	Rating
2.1. Fiscal Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
2.2. Financial Reporting and Compliance	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
2.3. Financial Viability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
2.4. Governance and Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
2.5. School Facility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
Notes and Evidence:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator 2.1: The CSDE site visit staff reviewed Great Oaks' last certified financial audit and uncovered no significant findings, conditions, or internal control weakness. • Indicator 2.2: The CSDE site visit staff reviewed Great Oaks' last certified financial audit, Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual (APPM), Board Policies and Procedures Manual (BPPM) and budgets, and interviewed the school Executive Director, Principals, Business Office Manager, and governing board members. Staff from the CSDE's Office of Internal Audit determined the APPM and BPPM contains the standard sections of such documents. However, the APPM requires some amendments including special education billing rate process, thresholds and signatories of checks and wire transfers, bank and credit card reviews and reconciliations, and payment authorizations. The BPPM must specify that it is the responsibility of the Governing Board to evaluate the Executive Director of the school. It is important that the employee handbook clearly state that the teachers and staff of the school are employees of the school and not of the charter school management organization. The reviewers determined that Great Oaks completed on-time submission of certified audits and annual budgets. School administration, in cooperation with its Governing Board, are preparing the required policy amendments. • Indicator 2.3: Staff from the CSDE's Office of Internal Audit reviewed Great Oaks' latest certified financial audit and determined Great Oaks' debt to asset ratio (total liabilities/total assets), debt service coverage ratio (net income + depreciation + interest expense) / (principal + interest payments), total margin (net income / total revenue) and current asset ratio (current assets / current liabilities) meets or exceeds the ranges recommended by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), signifying overall financial health. • Indicator 2.4: A review of Great Oaks school policies regarding conflict of interest and nepotism were found to be in compliance with the CSDE administrative oversight guidelines. Great Oaks' policies and procedures regarding background checks of staff and board members, open board meetings and board membership and membership training were reviewed and found to comply with state and federal laws, rules, and regulations. This finding is supported by a review of school policies and procedures, background checks, board training records, and the school's website. A review of Great Oaks' Bylaws found them to comply with state and federal laws, rules, and regulations. • Indicator 2.5: As evidenced during the site visit, Great Oaks has safe and well-maintained school facilities to support teaching and learning. The facility has been approved by Bridgeport Fire Marshal and Building Department. The school has proof of property insurance. 	

Standard 3: Student Population Indicators	Rating
3.1. Recruitment and Enrollment Process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
3.2. Waitlist and Enrollment Data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
3.3. Demographic Representation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
3.4. Family and Community Support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
3.5. School Culture and Climate	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
Notes and Evidence:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator 3.1: The latest CSDE audited student enrollment data from 2020-21 reported 670 students in Grades 7-12 with 99 percent residing in Bridgeport (the host district) and the remaining 1.0 percent residing in five surrounding towns. A review of the school's student enrollment policy, and interviews with school staff, board members, and parents determined all students are admitted through a blind lottery. • Indicator 3.2: A review of Great Oaks' waitlist information (Table 2, page 16) determined that it maintains a waitlist of families beyond the available number of seats. In 2021-22, 205 students were on the waiting list. The waitlist has included more than 138 students each year for the past three years. • Indicator 3.3: A review of Great Oaks' 2020-21 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports 70.0 percent of students qualify for free and reduced-price meals. The percentage of special education students at Great Oaks is 17.9 percent. Great Oaks' English Learner (EL) population is 12.2 percent. • Indicator 3.4: Great Oaks demonstrates strong community support, as evidenced by parent interviews conducted by the CSDE renewal team on the day of the site visit. The parent focus group described various communication methods between the school and families including texts, phone calls, and written communication including translations in second languages, when necessary. Currently, parents report receiving regular updates from the school that detail student academics and behavior. Parents expressed support for what they perceive is a good educational model that prepares their children for high school and beyond. Parents indicated they were satisfied with the school's commitment to serving students with diverse needs. Students testified during the public hearing and student interviews conducted by the CSDE renewal team on the day of the site visit that they are generally happy with the school and choice opportunity that the school provides. Over 76 individuals attended the January 25, 2022, renewal public hearing, and 36 individuals offered testimony supporting the school's efforts and the renewal of its charter. No one spoke out against the renewal of the school's charter. • Indicator 3.5: A review of the school's suspension rate, particularly its baseline pre-pandemic year, 2018-19 rate of 15.1 percent exceeds the host district by 2.9 percentage points and the state by 8.4 percent points. Great Oaks' baseline pre-pandemic year, 2018-19 Discipline Tier Based on Suspension/Expulsion Data was Tier four. A Tier four designates a school with Consistently High Suspension Rates (may also have high disproportionality): Overall, black, or Hispanic suspension rate ≥ 15 percent in two recent years. It is important that the school continue its efforts to minimize student behavioral incidents resulting in suspensions. A review of the school's chronic absenteeism in 2018-19 of 23.4 percent and 2019-20 of 16.5 percent, trended down to 6.4 percent in 2020-21, outperforming the host district 28.9 percent and the state average 19.0 percent. It is important that the school continue to use its systems and supports to identify students and families with attendance issues, determine root causes, and provide supports and resources to address barriers that negatively affect student attendance. 	

Standard 4: Legal Compliance Indicators	Rating
4.1. Open Meetings/Information Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.2. Students with Disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.3. English Learners	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.4. Rights of Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.5. Teacher/Staff Credentials, TEAM and EESP	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.6. Employee Rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
Notes and Evidence:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator 4.1: The school website and Governing Board documents demonstrate that Governing Board meetings are open and accessible to the public. The Governing Board meeting schedule for the year and meeting agendas are posted on the school's website. Education records and testing data are kept in locked file cabinets in a secure room. • Indicator 4.2: A review of Great Oaks 2020-21 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports the percentage of special education students at the school is 17.9 percent. To meet the needs of identified students, Great Oaks employs three special education teachers and is in the process of hiring a fourth, three paraeducator's and two social workers. Bridgeport Public Schools (BPS) provides an additional part-time social worker. The majority of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) reviewed noted that students receive academic support in the general education classroom. The site visit determined special education and related services are generally provided in the general education classroom. The school's philosophy of the provision of special education services in the general education classroom, except when a student requires instruction in a more restrictive setting are good examples of implementing the tenets of Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) as determined by the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). <p>The school has in place a system that allows general education teachers full access to student IEPs. IEPs are housed in a secure electronic drive by grade level and the special education administrator at the school controls permission of who can view each IEP. As Planning and Placement Teams are held, updated IEPs are placed on the drive and older ones are removed. Teachers are informed that a new IEP is available noting any major changes to the previous IEP. The school employs 30 Fellows through the AmeriCorps program. The Fellows work under the direction of lead teachers assisting with individual and small group tutoring, classroom instruction, substitute when needed, and analyze student data to help accelerate learning. Teachers share with fellows the accommodations/modifications outlined in each student's IEPs to support student learning.</p> <p>Student education files are kept in locked file cabinets in a secure room. The files have individual sign-in access sheets. The reviewed files were well organized and maintained. The Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings are scheduled and held by the school district in which the student resides. Great Oaks sends invitations to Parents/Guardians, students (as appropriate), and required PPT members to participate in the meetings.</p> <p>Administration reported they offer a "special education 101" as part of new teacher summer orientation. Administration noted the importance of offering professional development for staff in the areas of student progress monitoring and assessment. The CSDE site visit team encouraged administration to provide the professional learning for staff.</p>	

Concern noted during the site visit was the absence of the provision of speech and language services to 20 students whose IEPs require it. As for the site visit, the required speech and language services had not been provided since the start of the school year. It was reported by school administration that it had offered to hire and bill BPS for the provision of the required speech and language services. The district declined the offer. The district countered with an offer of teletherapy to meet student needs in November 2021. However, the school and the district were unable to secure the service. Since the date of the renewal site visit, the CSDE and the Bureau of Special Education has worked to ensure speech and language service dispute between BPSs and Great Oaks has been addressed. Further, BPS in collaboration with Great Oaks are directed to ensure required compensatory services are provided.

- **Indicator 4.3:** A review of Great Oaks' 2021-21 PSIS data reports that the percentage of students identified as ELs at the school is 12.2 percent. It appears that Great Oaks is committed to ensuring the success of Multilingual learners/English learners (MLs/ELs) at the school. The school has taken actions that affirm this commitment to MLs/ELs by demonstrating the integration of ML/EL supports in the core curriculum and by developing policies and procedures that pertain to ML/EL identification, testing and instruction. The school is commended for taking these actions and providing the ML/EL forms, procedures, and assessments in its Charter Renewal Application materials. Great Oaks is mandated to provide bilingual programming. However, it has been unsuccessful in hiring a certified bilingual teacher. In compliance, the school received a waiver for and has hired two certified Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) teachers in lieu of a certified bilingual teacher until such a teacher is hired. The school is providing native language support for students who have opted into the bilingual program through the bilingualism of the two TESOL staff.

The following information must be included in school policy and procedures:

- It is not necessary to administer the Home Language Survey to the student upon entry at Great Oaks. Rather, the initial HLS should be included in the student's cumulative file and/or the student's status as an ML/EL will be available in EdSight Secure.
 - Ensure that all potential MLs/ELs that enter at the beginning of the school year are screened to determine English language proficiency within 30 calendar days.
 - Ensure that all potential MLs/ELs that enter during the school year are screened to determine EL proficiency within 15 calendar days.
 - Ensure that parents/families/guardians are informed about a student's identification as an ML/EL and given the right to select language supports or decline services upon the student's identification as an ML/EL.
 - Ensure that all MLs/ELs are annually administered the LAS Links English Language Proficiency Assessment.
 - Ensure that relevant staff receive continue to professional learning on serving MLs, such as training related to strategies for sheltering content, developing vocabulary, etc. on a regular basis (at least annually).
- **Indicator 4.4:** Great Oaks student rights policies and procedures include admissions, handling of student information, due process protections, and state nondiscrimination laws. Interviews with parents and staff at the school supported the proper implementation and use of the policies.

- **Indicator 4.5:** A review of Great Oaks' staff file of February 10, 2022, reports 85.7 percent of staff in compliance with certification. It is the responsibility of the school to take steps to ensure that 100 percent of the staff holds appropriate certificates, permits, or authorizations for their positions. Current legislation requires that at least 50 percent of educators serving in a charter school must hold a valid certificate (Initial, Provisional, or Professional Certificate) and the remaining 50 percent may hold other interim certificates, temporary certificates, permits or authorizations. Of the 56 staff members requiring certification, 28 staff members or 50 percent hold a valid certificate, and 20 staff members or 35.7 percent hold other temporary certificates, permits or authorizations. The remaining 8 staff members or 14.3 percent have no active certification/permit on file and are out of compliance. Of the 50 percent allowed to serve under other certificates, permits or authorizations, legislation also allows for the issuance of a Charter School Educator Permit (CSEP) for no more than 30 percent of the educators serving in a charter school. Great Oaks currently has seven staff members or 12.5 percent holding CSEPs. Options to bring staff into compliance for certification, pending they met criteria for each option, include a Long-Term Substitute Certificate, a Durational Shortage Area permit (DSAP), a Temporary 90-Day Certificate, an Interim Educator Certificate or a Resident Educator Permit.

Great Oaks is not in compliance with the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program. Great Oaks does not have a current TEAM district support plan on file with the CSDE. The school does not have a trained reflection paper reviewer on staff. Minimal mentoring hours of staff with initial certificates have been logged as of February 10, 2022.

The school is in partial compliance with Educator Evaluation and Support Plan (EESP). During the site visit on January 11th, staff interviewed were not able to confirm the use of student learning goals/objectives as a required component of the educator evaluation and support plan, and the school did not have a functioning Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC). The school is currently working to establish a PDEC and hold regular meetings. The school has an approved Educator Evaluation and Support Plan (2015-16) on file with the CSDE. However, the plan is outdated and is not aligned with the *CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017 (Guidelines 2017)*. As the Educator Evaluation and Support (EES) 2022 Council revises the *Guidelines 2017* this spring 2022, the school's PDEC will need to revise their current plan to be aligned with the new guidelines. Information for submitting a plan aligned to the new guidelines for the CSDE approval will be forthcoming.

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

Prepared by:	Reviewed by:	Approved by:
Robert Kelly, Charter School Program Manager	Lisa Lamenzo, Division Director Turnaround Office	Desi Nesmith, Deputy Commissioner

GREAT OAKS ACADEMY DATA

Table 1: 2020-21 Student Enrollment and Demographic Information	
Grades served:	6-12
Total enrollment:	670
Percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals:	70.0
Percentage of special education students:	17.9
Percentage of students with limited English proficiency:	12.2
Percentage of American Indian or Alaska Native students:	*
Percentage of Black students:	47.8
Percentage of Hispanic students:	46.3
Percentage of Caucasian students:	5.1

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

Table 2: Student Waitlist and Mobility Information			
Performance Metric:	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Waitlist number:	136	256	205
Number of enrolled students who left during the school year:	47	39	102
Number of students who did not re-enroll the next year and had not completed the highest grade at the school:	71	109	0

Table 3: School Performance: All Students									
	2016-2017			2017-2018			2018-2019		
Indicator	School	Host District	State	School	Host District	State	School	Host District	State
Accountability Index	50.1	59.3	73.2	52.7	62.4	74.9	48.2	61.2	74.2
ELA-All Students									
Performance Index (Target 75)	47.0	51.5	67.1	46.5	54.3	67.6	52.3	54.3	67.7
Academic Growth Average Percentage of Target Achieved (Target 100%)	37.9	48.8	55.4	45.1	59.8	60.7	58.3	53.4	59.9
Math-All Students									
Performance Index (Target 75)	43.2	44.8	62.2	45.0	46.1	62.7	43.1	46.4	63.1
Academic Growth Average Percentage of Target Achieved (Target 100%)	52.0	55.8	61.7	55.6	53.7	61.9	40.5	52.6	62.5

Table 4: School Performance-High Needs Students									
	2016-2017			2017-2018			2018-2019		
Indicator	School	Host District	State	School	Host District	State	School	Host District	State
ELA-High Needs Students									
Performance Index (Target 75)	45.8	47.5	55.9	46.2	52.2	57.5	50.7	52.3	58.1
Academic Growth Average Percentage of Target Achieved (Target 100%)	35.9	47.1	49.8	44.2	58.8	55.6	55.6	52.4	55.1
Math-High Needs Students									
Performance Index (Target 75)	42.5	41.1	50.5	44.1	44.2	52.0	41.2	44.6	52.7
Academic Growth Average Percentage of Target Achieved (Target 100%)	53.4	53.4	53.7	51.7	53.3	55.4	38.6	51.8	55.2

Table 5: School Culture and Climate									
	2018-2019			2019-2020 ¹			2020-2021 ²		
Indicator	School	Host District	State	School	Host District	State	School	Host District	State
Chronic Absenteeism Rate	23.4%	18.8%	10.4%	16.5%	19.7%	12.2%	6.4%	28.9%	19.0 %
Suspension Rate	15.1%	12.0%	6.7%	14.3%	9.4%	4.9%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Discipline Tier	4	4	3	4	2	3	N/A	N/A	N/A

¹ In the 2019-20 school year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person classes were cancelled in mid-March; all districts switched to fully remote instruction for the remainder of the school year.

² In the 2020-21 school year, students attended school in-person to varying degrees; some learned fully/mostly remotely for the entire school year.