

**Connecticut State Board of Education  
Hartford**

Accountability and Support Committee

**Thursday, November 14, 2024**  
450 Columbus Blvd.  
Plaza North, Meeting Room C & D  
Hartford, Connecticut

**Meeting Minutes**  
**(Approved on: January 9, 2025)**

**I. Call to Order**

Pursuant to the notice filed with the Secretary of the State, Committee Chairperson Erin D. Benham, called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m.

**Committee**

**Members Present:**

Erin D. Benham  
Donald F. Harris, Jr.  
Allan B Taylor  
Dr. Seth D. Zimmerman

**Committee**

**Members Absent:**

Kristen A. Record

**CSDE Staff Present:**

Dr. Melissa Jenkins  
Shakira Jacobs-Vazquez  
Leslie Navarrete

**Guests Present:**

Monique Frasier, School Director, Common Ground High School, New Haven  
Joel Tolman, Director of Community & Engagement, Common Ground High School, New Haven  
Jeremy Stone, Lead Teacher of Curriculum & Instruction, Common Ground High School, New Haven  
Liz Cox, Board Member and Chair of School Committee, Common Ground High School, New Haven  
Dr. Troy A. Monroe, CEO/Superintendent, Jumoke Academy, Hartford  
Dr. Marie Gordon Hall, Chief Academic Officer, Jumoke Academy, Hartford  
Ana Marcil, Human Resources Manager, Jumoke Academy, Hartford  
Sharron Solomon-McCarthy, Student Support Services Director, Jumoke Academy, Hartford  
Che Dawson, Executive Director/Principal, Highville Charter School, New Haven  
John Scalice, Chief Executive Officer, Great Oaks Charter School, Bridgeport  
Latoya Hubbard, Chief Operating Officer, Great Oaks Charter School, Bridgeport

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Dr. Seth Zimmerman, moved, and Allan B. Taylor, seconded, that the Committee approve the minutes of the October 17, 2024, Accountability and Support Committee meeting.

**Vote:**

|                   |                                    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>In Favor:</b>  | Taylor, Harris, Jr., and Zimmerman |
| <b>Abstained:</b> | Benham                             |
| <b>Opposed:</b>   | 0                                  |
| <b>Absent:</b>    | Record                             |

**III. Charter School Renewal Corrective Action Updates:**

**Common Ground High School (Common Ground), New Haven**

Chairperson Benham recognized the meeting agenda item and opened the meeting to Dr. Melissa Jenkins, Chief Turnaround Officer, CSDE. Dr. Jenkins provided an overview of the work to date with Common Ground. She welcomed Common Ground School Director Monique Frasier; Director of Community & Engagement Joel Tolman; Lead Teacher of Curriculum & Instruction Jeremy Stone; and Board Member and Chair of the School Committee Liz Cox to provide a progress update.

Common Ground shared highlights of its' progress in its' corrective action focus points of academic achievement in the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Some of the highlights Common Ground shared: The charter school has been identifying and tracking wrap around services support for academics; the charter school has implemented an afterschool program for academic support for four days a week and a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for academics, despite minor leadership set back; and the new Director established an Attendance, Culture, and Engagement (ACE) Team to support the newly implemented MTSS.

Common Ground will continue to work on improving the charter school's chronic absenteeism. Some of practices the charter school is using to support the work include improving staff and

school culture and providing professional development that meets staff needs and around high focus areas for Common Ground.

The Chair opened the floor for comments and questions from the Committee.

**Jumoke Academy (Jumoke), Hartford**

Dr. Melissa Jenkins, Chief Turnaround Officer for the CSDE, provided an overview of the work to date with Jumoke. Dr. Jenkins welcomed Jumoke CEO/Superintendent Dr. Troy A. Monroe; Chief Academic Officer Dr. Marie Gordon Hall; Human Resources Manager Ana Marcil; and Student Support Services Director Sharron Solomon-McCarthy to provide a progress update.

Jumoke shared highlights of its' progress in its' corrective action focus points of academic achievement in ELA and mathematics, chronic absenteeism, and teacher certification compliance. Some of the highlights shared: Jumoke is improving academic achievement through the implementation of intentional lesson design; Jumoke is providing coaching support to Jumoke educators and has added opportunities for teacher collaboration in the master schedule; and Jumoke has attending the bi-weekly SERC and CSDE Talk Tuesdays – Student Attendance and Engagement. Jumoke also reported to the Committee on the social effects impacting student chronic absenteeism, such as immigration status.

The charter school's status for certification compliance is 71 percent. Jumoke noted that 8 out of 10 submitted certification applications are pending approval from the CSDE, and the charter school is having retention issues because it is difficult for Jumoke to compete with the benefits and salary offered by other schools, especially in shortage teaching area.

The Chair opened the floor for comments and questions from the Committee.

**Highville Charter School (Highville), New Haven**

Dr. Melissa Jenkins, Chief Turnaround Officer for the CSDE, provided an overview of the work to date with Highville. Dr. Jenkins welcomed Highville Executive Director/Principal Che Dawson to provide a progress update.

Highville shared highlights of its' progress in its' corrective action focus points of academic performance in ELA and mathematics and chronic absenteeism. Some of the highlights Highville shared: The charter school has provided coaching and continuous professional development around utilizing data to inform instruction to improve academic performance; the charter school has implemented a goal setting initiative with students and their parents and guardians to address chronic absenteeism; the charter school is offering afterschool academic support to students struggling with academics and holding bi-weekly meetings with Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) Team to track student progress and teacher effectiveness. These meetings ensure that the SRBI teacher, general education teacher and families are in concert regarding the academic gap and the strategies each of person is responsible for implementing.

Highville added that the charter school is focused on building family awareness of chronic absenteeism (exceeding 10 percent absenteeism), and truancy through phone calls and informational session on the connection between attendance and performance and is focused on strengthening teacher and student relationship. Additionally, Highville has implemented class-wide incentives and is recognizing and celebrating student attendance. Highville reported to the Committee that it is working on building awareness of the certification process and currently two teachers are not certified due to turnover.

The Chair opened the floor for comments and questions from the Committee.

#### **Great Oaks Charter School (GO), Bridgeport**

Dr. Melissa Jenkins, Chief Turnaround Officer for the CSDE, provided an overview of the work to date with GO. Dr. Jenkins welcomed GO Chief Executive Officer Scalice; and Chief Operating Officer Latoya Hubbard to provide a progress update.

GO shared highlights of its' progress in its' corrective action focus points of academic achievement in ELA and mathematics and chronic absenteeism. Some of the highlights GO shared with the Committee: GO is restructuring Tier I instruction and support systems to support the academic achievement of ELA and mathematics; GO is restructuring curriculum to imbed coaching to support professional development work; GO has implemented attendance goal setting with students and sharing period attendance and school attendance with parents and guardians every two weeks; GO has changed the onboarding process to determine eligibility for long-term substitute teacher authorization and is submitting applications to the CSDE well in advance; and GO is providing certification support such as tutoring and guidance through the certification process within the 60 days.

The charter school's status for certification compliance is 85 percent – 64 percent certified, 10 percent with a charter school educator permit, and 17 percent with a long-term substitute authorization. Additionally, GO is offering financial assistance for the Praxis test and wraparound support services to prospective educators to become certified and to hire.

GO continues to work on addressing transportation issues as it is a contributor to chronic absenteeism in the high school level.

The Chair opened the floor for comments and questions from the Committee. The Committee commended the GO team on their work and progress.

#### **IV. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Prepared by: Leslie Navarrete