

**Connecticut State Board of Education  
Hartford**

Accountability and Support Committee

**Thursday, May 15, 2025**  
450 Columbus Blvd.  
Plaza North, Meeting Room C & D  
Hartford, Connecticut

**Meeting Minutes**  
**(Approved on: June 18, 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 3:27 p.m.

**Committee**

**Members Present:**

Erin D. Benham  
Donald F. Harris, Jr.  
Kristen A. Record

**SBOE Committee**

**Members Present:**

Paula S. Gilberto  
Dr. Gladys B. Labas

**Committee**

**Members Absent:**

Dr. Seth D. Zimmerman

**CSDE Staff Present:**

Deputy Commissioner Charles Hewes, Ed.D  
Jennifer Webb  
Shakira Jacobs-Vazquez  
Greg Dresko  
Leslie Navarrete

**Guests Present:**

- Michael Veronneau, Principal; Crosby High School, Waterbury
- Dr. Darren Schwartz, Superintendent, Waterbury Public Schools
- Robert Johnston, Principal, John F. Kennedy High School, Waterbury
- Edward Lavoie, Principal, Teachers’ Memorial Global Studies Magnet School, Norwich
- Susan Lessard, Superintendent, Teachers’ Memorial Global Studies Magnet School, Norwich
- Elizabeth Nimons, Principal, Prendergast School, Ansonia
- Dr. Joseph DiBacco, Superintendent, Prendergast School, Ansonia
- 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
- John Scalice, CEO, Chief Executive Officer, Great Oaks Charter School, Bridgeport
- Latoya Hubbard, COO, Chief Operating Officer, Great Oaks Charter School, Bridgeport
- Robert Carlson, Board Chair, Great Oaks Charter School, Bridgeport

**II. Approval of Minutes**

The Committee tabled the minutes of the April 23, 2025, Accountability and Support Committee meeting.

**III. Commissioner’s Network (Network) Planning Schools:**

Jennifer Webb, the Bureau Chief of the Turnaround Office, gave an overview of the Commissioner’s Network program and the year-long process planning schools must follow to develop a Turnaround Plan for consideration into the Network by the State Board of Education (SBE).

**Crosby High School (CHS) and John F. Kennedy High School (KHS), Waterbury**

Bureau Chief Jennifer Webb presented an overview of the results from the Commissioner’s Network Operation and Instruction Audit Report, along with the Turnaround Plans for CHS and KHS. While the Turnaround Plans align with district priorities, they also emphasize the specific needs of each school. CHS and KHS are committed to enhancing teaching and learning through the implementation of research-based strategies, instructional best practices, and targeted interventions designed to improve student outcomes. CHS will focus on strengthening professional learning for educators, enhancing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for academic and behavioral interventions, and ensuring equitable access to rigorous, standards-based instruction and KHS will prioritize high-quality professional development, strengthen multi-tiered academic support systems, and ensure equitable access to rigorous, differentiated instruction.

Ms. Webb welcomed the principals of CHS and KHS, Michael Veronneau and Robert Johnston, respectively, and Superintendent Darren Schwartz to discuss each school's Turnaround Plan in greater detail.

Through participation in the Commissioner's Network, CHS plans to expand professional development opportunities, refine the use of data to drive instructional decisions, implement structured supports to reduce chronic absenteeism, and foster a positive school culture. Additionally, CHS will prioritize the refinement of its scheduling to maximize time for collaborative planning, instructional coaching, and targeted student support, ensuring that high-quality teaching practices are effectively implemented and sustained across all classrooms.

KHS is dedicated to enhancing teaching and learning through the implementation of research-based strategies, instructional best practices, and targeted interventions designed to improve student outcomes. The school will prioritize high-quality professional development, strengthen multi-tiered academic support systems, and ensure equitable access to rigorous, differentiated instruction for all students. Participation in the Commissioner's Network will allow KHS to expand professional learning opportunities, refine data-driven instructional decision-making, implement structured academic and behavioral interventions, and develop proactive attendance initiatives to increase student engagement. Additionally, the school will optimize scheduling to provide more time for collaborative planning and instructional coaching, ensuring the consistent implementation of high-quality teaching practices across all classrooms.

#### **Teachers' Memorial Global Studies Magnet Middle School (Global Studies), Norwich**

Bureau Chief Jennifer Webb presented an overview of the results from the Commissioner's Network Operation and Instruction Audit Report, along with the Turnaround Plans for Global Studies. She welcomed Global Studies Principal Edward Lavoie and Superintendent Susan Lessard to discuss each school's Turnaround Plan in greater detail.

Global Studies is committed to enhancing teaching and learning by implementing evidence-based strategies, methods, and best practices that have proven to improve student academic performance. The school will emphasize high-quality professional development and establish strong academic support systems, including targeted interventions, differentiation, and specialized instruction. Additionally, it aims to create a safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environment.

Participation in the Commissioner's Network will allow Global Studies to strengthen professional learning opportunities for staff, expand data-driven instructional decision-making, implement structured interventions during the Flex Block, and develop proactive strategies to improve student attendance and engagement. The school will also refine collaborative planning structures and increase collaboration time for staff to ensure that instructional practices are consistent and effective across the entire school.

#### **Prendergast School (Prendergast), Ansonia**

Bureau Chief Jennifer Webb presented an overview of the results from the Commissioner's Network Operation and Instruction Audit Report, along with the Turnaround Plans Prendergast.

Prendergast School Principal Elizabeth Nimons and Superintendent, Joseph DiBacco to discuss each school's Turnaround Plan in greater detail.

Prendergast is focused on improving student achievement through student-centered, evidence-based teaching practices that address the diverse needs of all learners. The school will provide high-quality, targeted professional development and enhance academic and behavioral support systems. It will also aim to foster student voice, belonging, and engagement. By joining the Commissioner's Network, Prendergast will improve professional learning coherence, better use data for planning and instruction, and implement targeted interventions for high-needs groups, including multilingual learners and students with disabilities. The school will refine planning protocols, create more leadership opportunities for staff, and promote effective instructional practices through structured coaching and feedback.

#### **IV. Charter School Renewal Corrective Action Updates:**

##### **Jumoke Academy (Jumoke), Hartford**

Jennifer Webb Bureau Chief, Turnaround Office, provided an overview of the work to date with Jumoke. She 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.

### **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 English language arts (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.

### **V. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Prepared by: Leslie Navarrete