

Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

Accountability and Support Committee

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

450 Columbus Blvd
Plaza North, Meeting Room C & D
Hartford, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes
(Approved on: November 12, 2025)

I. Call to Order

Pursuant to the notice filed with the Secretary of the State, and with the interim absence of Committee Chair Erin D. Benham, Committee Chairperson Pro Tempore Kristen A. Record. called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Committee

Members Present:

Donald F. Harris, Jr.
Kristen A. Record
Dr. Seth D. Zimmerman

Committee

Members Absent:

Erin D. Benham

CSDE Staff Present:

Deputy Commissioner Charles E. Hewes, Ed.D.
Dr. Melissa Jenkins
Felicia Canty
Shakira Jacobs-Vazquez
Leslie Navarrete

Guests Present:

- Adam Rosenberg, Principal, Booker T. Washington Academy, New Haven
- Charlene Antoine, Principal, Booker T. Washington Academy, New Haven
- Christina Ellington, Chief Schools Officer, Booker T. Washington Academy, New Haven
- Tanya Collins, Interim Principal, Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication, New London
- Amy Geary, Director of Special Education, Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication, New London
- Amy D’Angelo, Superintendent, Achievement First
- Samantha Lucky, Regional Superintendent, Achievement First
- John Sharkey, Chief Academic Officer, Achievement First
- Stacy Gilinson, Manager of Teacher and Leader Certification, Achievement First
- Shaila Garnett, Elementary Principal, Achievement First Bridgeport, Bridgeport
- Stephaine Fox, Middle School Principal, Achievement First Bridgeport, Bridgeport
- Sueleidy Cruz, Elementary Principal, Achievement First Hartford, Hartford
- Oriana Simmons, Middle School Principal, Achievement First Hartford, Hartford
- Laneka Thomas, High School Principal, Achievement First Hartford
- Lauren Raimondi, Elementary Principal, Amistad Academy, New Haven
- Jasmine Watts, Middle School Principal, Amistad Academy, New Haven
- AJ Lowe, High School Principal, Amistad Academy, New Haven
- Serena Johnson, Elementary Principal, Elm City College Preparatory, New Haven
- Tanesha Foreman, Middle School Principal, Elm City College Preparatory, New Haven

II. Approval of Minutes

Record moved, and Harris, Jr., seconded, that the Committee approve the minutes of April 23, 2025, and May 15, 2025, Accountability and Support Committee meetings.

Vote:

In Favor:	Harris, Jr., Zimmerman, and Record
Abstained:	0
Opposed:	0
Absent:	Benham

III. Charter School Renewal Corrective Action Updates

Booker T. Washington Academy (BTWA), New Haven

Chair Pro Tempore Record recognized the meeting agenda item and opened the meeting to Dr. Melissa Jenkins, Chief Turnaround Officer, CSDE. Dr. Jenkins shared an overview of the ongoing efforts at BTWA to implement the charter school’s Corrective Action Plan. This plan focuses on improving student achievement in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics and ensuring teacher certification compliance.

She welcomed BTWA Principals Adam Rosenberg and Charlene Antoine and their charter school team to provide a progress update.

BTWA shared several key highlights: Professional development is now targeted based on teacher need and data is being used more intentionally to strengthen instruction and its execution. Grade 6 students have met the mathematics target; however, the charter school continues to face challenges in Tier 1 instruction due to onboarding gaps and teacher turnover. BTWA shared that teachers are stronger in maintaining structural routines than in executing Tier 1 instruction. To address these concerns, BTWA is working to strengthen data collection and processes to improve instructional planning in ELA and to support professional development. Continued focus is being placed on strengthening Tier 1 instruction to improve student learning, particularly in Grade 5 and 6 mathematics. Data has also been leveraged to restructure the WIN program.

BTWA went on to report that budget constraints have resulted in the reduction of interventionists, which has weakened the intervention model. Chronic absenteeism numbers shifted at the end of the year, but the 2024–25 school year began with a high chronic absenteeism rate. The charter school is currently evaluating which shifts to maintain or discontinue to strengthen Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) strategies for attendance and family engagement.

Chair Pro Tempore Record opened the floor for comments and questions from the Committee. Chair Pro Tempore noted that the decline in Grade 5 math performance is concerning. Additionally, Grade 7 and Grade 8 student performance in science declined significantly, prompting discussion about how the charter school will effectively address these gaps in student achievement. Chair Pro Tempore suggested utilizing components from the TEAM Module “Planning for Instruction” to inform related professional development as a way to further target professional development and strengthen instruction. The committee discussed the suggestion.

Committee members expressed appreciation to BTWA for its update and noted they look forward to continuing to engage with the charter school on its progress in implementing its Corrective Action Plan.

Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication (ISAAC), New London

Dr. Jenkins provided an overview of the ongoing efforts at ISAAC to implement the charter school’s Corrective Action Plan. This plan focuses on improving academic achievement in mathematics and ELA and addressing student discipline and human resource management. She welcomed ISAAC Interim Principal Tanya Collins and Director of Special Education Amy Geary to provide a progress update.

ISAAC reported updated suspension data and described how the implementation of positive behavior supports, and restorative practices has contributed to a decrease in suspensions. The charter school went on to report that school climate data indicate that 100 percent of students feel comfortable approaching at least one adult for support; ISAAC highlighted that strong relationships are the “secret sauce” behind this improvement. In ELA, ISAAC has observed gains in reading-comprehension strategies through structured observations and learning walks. The instructional coach is providing professional development on scaffolding writing to build academic vocabulary.

Next steps include expanding educator professional development in writing, increasing accountable talk, and strengthening student feedback using Think-Write-Pair-Share. ISAAC also noted it will continue to address human resource-related corrective actions and has drafted and published a Program of Studies to clarify course offerings and expectations.

Chair Pro Tempore Record opened the floor for questions and comments from the Committee. The Committee recommended Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC) training related to teacher evaluation and expressed appreciation to ISAAC for its update. Committee members noted they look forward to continued engagement with the charter school as it implements its Corrective Action Plan.

Achievement First (AF) Charter Schools

- **Achievement First Bridgeport (AFBA), Bridgeport;**
- **Achievement First Hartford (AFHA), Hartford;**
- **Amistad Academy (AF Amistad), New Haven; and**
- **Elm City College Preparatory (ECCP), New Haven**

Dr. Jenkins provided an overview of the ongoing efforts at Achievement First (AF) Charter Schools to implement the Corrective Action Plan. This plan focuses on improving performance index in ELA and mathematics and chronic absenteeism. She welcomed AF Superintendent Amy D'Angelo; AF Regional Superintendent Samantha Lucky; AF Chief Academic Officer John Sharkey; AF Manager of Teacher Leader Certification Stacy Gilinson; AFBA Elementary Principal Shaila Garnett; AFBA Middle School Principal Stephaine Fox; AFHA Elementary Principal Sueleidy Cruz; AFHA Middle School Principal Oriana Simmons; AFHA High School Principal Laneka Thomas; AF Amistad Elementary Principal Lauren Raimondi; AF Amistad Middle School Principal Jasmine Watts; ECCP Elementary Principal Serena Johnson; and ECCP Middle School Principal Tanesha Foreman to provide a progress update.

AF shared highlights of its progress on corrective action focus areas—ELA and mathematics performance index and reducing chronic absenteeism. At AFBA, the charter school recommitted over the summer to addressing chronic absenteeism, reported ELA growth in K–Grade 6 with challenges in Grades 4, 5, and 7 tied to staffing instability, and opened the year with seven vacancies. At AFHA, chronic absenteeism has decreased following the distribution of family attendance toolkits; the charter school is coaching teacher-candidates for certification compliance and building mathematics/science certification pipelines. At AF Amistad, the charter school has met its K–Grade 8 ELA goal, observed mathematic gains attributed to IXL routines and stable staffing. In addition, AF Amistad reported a decline in chronic absenteeism and noted sixteen educators progressing to full certification. At ECCP, the charter school continues active-learning professional development and coaching, reported staffing inconsistencies (a kindergarten resignation and Grade 2 instability), and is working on developing a data dashboard, and providing PRAXIS tutoring and a \$3,000 incentive for full certification while continuing targeted work with chronically absent students.

The Chair Pro Tempore opened the floor for questions and comments from the Committee. The Committee raised concerns about chronic absenteeism, as well as a general trend of stagnant or declining percentages of fully certified educators alongside an increase in Long-Term Substitute Authorizations. Committee members expressed appreciation to AF for its update and noted they look forward to continued engagement with the school as it implements its Corrective Action Plan.

IV. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:19 p.m.