



Connecticut Charter Schools

Best Practices Annual Report 2024–2025

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Connecticut Charter Schools

In 1996, the Connecticut General Assembly and Governor enacted legislation establishing charter schools in the state and empowering the State Board of Education (SBE) as the sole authorizer of charter schools. As nonsectarian public schools, charter schools represent innovative school models that utilize diverse, research-based educational methods. There are 21 charter schools statewide — 20 state charter schools and one local charter school located across 10 host districts. These schools serve over 10,000 students.

Connecticut has both state and local charter schools. A state charter school is a new public school approved by the SBE. A local charter school is a new school or part of a public school that is converted into a charter school and is approved by the local board of education and the SBE. As independent local education agencies (LEAs), charter schools are granted significant autonomy in exchange for strict accountability and high expectations for school performance.

Every year, charter schools prepare and submit an annual report to the Connecticut State Department

of Education (CSDE) summarizing school progress toward meeting academic and organizational performance goals, in alignment with the CSDE charter school performance framework. The *Charter School Annual Report* includes a description of the educational progress of students in the school, the financial condition of the school, the fulfillment of the school mission, the composition of the student body with efforts taken to increase racial and ethnic diversity, and the self-reported best practices that schools believe positively impact student and school outcomes. [*Charter School Annual Reports*](#) can be found on the CSDE website.



Charter Schools Statewide

Achievement First Bridgeport Academy
Bridgeport, CT

Achievement First Hartford Academy
Hartford, CT

Amistad Academy
New Haven, CT

Booker T. Washington Academy
New Haven, CT

The Bridge Academy
Bridgeport, CT

Brass City Charter School
Waterbury, CT

Capital Preparatory Harbor School
Bridgeport, CT

Common Ground High School
New Haven, CT

Elm City College Preparatory
New Haven, CT

Elm City Montessori School
New Haven, CT (local charter)

Explorations Charter School
Winsted, CT

Great Oaks Charter School
Bridgeport, CT

Highville Charter School
New Haven, CT

Integrated Day Charter School
Norwich, CT

Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication
New London, CT

Jumoke Academy
Hartford, CT

New Beginnings Family Academy
Bridgeport, CT

Odyssey Community School
Manchester, CT

Park City Charter School
Bridgeport, CT

Side by Side Charter School
Norwalk, CT

Stamford Charter School for Excellence
Stamford, CT

Charter School Performance Standards

The CSDE charter school performance framework includes four performance standards: Standard 1 – School Performance; Standard 2 – Stewardship, Governance, and Management; Standard 3 – Student Population; and Standard 4 – Legal Compliance. This framework holds charter schools accountable for impact and results.

These four performance standards are consistent

across all charter school accountability systems and processes, including the initial application, annual reporting, and charter renewal. The best practices provided in the *Charter School Annual Reports* represent self-reported promising practices by Connecticut charter schools for each performance standard.

The performance standards are further defined on pages 4 and 5.



Standard 1: School Performance

Is the school a successful model resulting in strong student outcomes and a positive school climate?



Standard 2: Stewardship, Governance, and Management

Is the school financially and organizationally healthy and viable?



Standard 3: Student Population

Is the school promoting equity by effectively attracting, enrolling, and retaining students, particularly among targeted populations?



Standard 4: Legal Compliance

Is the school acting in compliance with applicable laws and regulations?



Performance Standards Defined

Standard 1: School Performance

Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System, launched in the 2014–15 fiscal year, includes a broad set of 12 indicators that help tell the story of how well a school is preparing its students for success in college, careers, and life. The system moves beyond test scores and graduation rates and instead provides a multifactor perspective on district and school performance while incorporating student growth over time.

Standard 2: Stewardship, Governance, and Management

Financial Management — The school materially complies with applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations relating to financial management and oversight expectations, as evidenced by an annual independent audit.

Financial Reporting and Compliance — The school materially complies with applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations relating to financial reporting and compliance requirements (e.g., timely submission of reports, annual inventory of current assets, and review of appropriate financial controls).

Financial Viability — The school demonstrates strong short- and long-term fiscal viability, as evidenced by the ability to meet enrollment projections, the reasonableness and certainty of revenue projections and funding sources, margins and cash flow, and debt levels.

Governance and Management — The school materially complies with applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations relating to governance by its board, including training related to charter school governing council responsibilities during the term of the charter.

School Facility — The school materially complies with applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations relating to school facilities, grounds, and transportation, including but not limited to valid certificate of occupancy or other required building-use authorization, compliance with health, safety, and fire code requirements, and maintaining and documenting required insurance coverage.

Standard 3: Student Population

Recruitment and Enrollment Process — The school materially complies with applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations relevant to student populations. The school maintains fair and equitable enrollment and recruitment processes and provides transparent and open access.

Waitlist and Enrollment Data — The school's enrollment variance equals or exceeds 95 percent in the most recent year.

Demographic Representation — The student body reflects the demographics of the targeted population and/or surrounding communities. There is strong evidence of efforts to attract, enroll, and retain special populations.

Family and Community Support — The school maintains strong parent satisfaction and community support.

School Culture and Climate — The school maintains clear policies and consistent implementation of policies (e.g., ongoing behavior intervention monitoring, low frequency of suspensions and/or expulsions).

Standard 4: Legal Compliance

Open Meetings/Information Management — The school materially complies with applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations relating to the maintenance and handling of information. All governing board meetings are open and accessible to the public. The school maintains the proper and secure education records, ensures proper transfer of student records, and maintains secure testing materials.

Students with Disabilities — Consistent with a state charter school's status as the LEA, the school complies with applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations regarding students with disabilities. These include but are not limited to, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section (§) 10-66ee(d)(7). The school also complies with its own policies and procedures governing the education of students with disabilities and those suspected of having a disability. A state charter school receives funding for special education from the LEAs of enrolled students' residence, as set forth in C.G.S. Section (§) 10-66ee(d)(7). As such, while a state charter school is generally considered the LEA, it is not considered the LEA for purposes of IDEA grant funding. Furthermore, state law designates the LEA of the child's residence as responsible for the identification of the child's eligibility for special education services and the determination of special education services to be provided pursuant to the IDEA for students attending a charter school.

English Learner/Multilingual Learner (EL/ML) — The school materially complies with applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations, and required policies, including but not limited to Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), U.S. Department of Education guidance, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA) relating to requirements for serving ELs/MLs.

Rights of Students — The school materially complies with applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations relating to the rights of students, including but not limited to appropriate handling of student information, due process protections, and state nondiscrimination laws.

Teacher/Staff Credentials — The school materially complies with applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations relating to state certification requirements, as modified by any waivers that have been granted (C.G.S. § 10-66dd), the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-145o, educator evaluation and support requirements pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-151b, and the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies § 10-145d-401.

Employee Rights — The school materially complies with applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations relating to employment considerations, including but not limited to the Family Medical Leave Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, employment contracts, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other applicable laws (C.G.S. § 10-66dd).

Charter School Performance

Connecticut charter schools account for approximately two percent of the state's public schoolchildren. Many of Connecticut's charter schools maintain a waitlist of hundreds of students, demonstrating interest in school choice by families and students. In 2024–25, over 4,000 students sought enrollment and were waitlisted.

Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System launched in the 2014–15 fiscal year. It is a system developed under the Elementary and Secondary Education (ESEA) Flexibility Renewal Act and incorporated into Connecticut's state plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The accountability system is a broad set of 12 indicators that help tell the story of how well a school is preparing its students for success in college, careers, and life. The system moves beyond test scores and graduation rates and instead provides a multifactor perspective of district and school performance and incorporates student growth over time.

As part of the Next Generation Accountability System, all public schools including charter schools receive a report that provides a picture of how the school measures on all 12 of the indicators. The data provides a comprehensive and holistic picture of student and school performance.

Best Practices

[Connecticut General Statutes § 10-66ii](#) requires the CSDE to annually publish a report of the best practices reported by the charter schools. The goal of sharing the best practices is to help other schools and districts learn about the promising practices reported by the charter schools as having positive impacts on outcomes. Please visit the CSDE's Charter School Program [website](#) for a complete list of annual reports submitted by Connecticut's charter schools to learn more about the best practices implemented by these schools.

