

V.A.

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Hartford**

**TO BE PROPOSED:**

February 1, 2017

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of Booker T. Washington Academy from July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2020, subject to the conditions noted in the Commissioner's February 1, 2017, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of \_\_\_\_\_, this first day of February, Two Thousand Seventeen.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary  
State Board of Education

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Hartford**

**TO:** State Board of Education

**FROM:** Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education

**DATE:** February 1, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Renewal of State Charter – Booker T. Washington Academy, New Haven

**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, and correspondence 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**

On August 4, 2014, the State Board of Education approved the Commissioner's recommendation to grant the Booker T. Washington Academy (BTWA) charter for the period July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2017, subject to the conditions specified in a resolution approved by the Board (see Attachment A). Also, as conditioned by the approved charter is a report of BTWA's first year academic, financial, and operational systems and performance (also Attachment A).

In 2014-15, BTWA began its first year of operation. That year, the school served 91 students in Grades K-1. Of those students, 89 percent resided in the host district of New Haven and the remaining 11 percent resided in Hamden and West Haven. In 2015-16, BTWA added Grade 2, increasing the total to 180 students. Currently BTWA serves 241 students in Grades K-3 with 88 percent residing in New Haven and the remaining 12 percent residing in five surrounding districts, East Haven, Hamden, Middletown, North Haven and West Haven. Please refer to Table 1 (page 11) of the attached Charter Renewal Report which provides the 2015-16 student enrollment and demographic data.

## **Charter Renewal Process**

*Application for Renewal of Charter:* The CSDE accepted an application for the renewal of BTWA's charter on September 2, 2016. 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. BTWA submitted data and evidence to substantiate the charter school's written responses.

A renewal team comprised of 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. Overall, the team determined that the application responded effectively to the areas required and provided sufficient supporting evidence.

*Renewal Site Visit:* On November 2, 2016, the CSDE renewal team conducted an on-site visit at BTWA. The purpose of the renewal on-site visit was to observe BTWA's programs, policies, practices, and procedures to assess their efficacy and fidelity to the school's charter and aligned operating systems. Evidence was collected through on-site visit observations, document reviews, interviews and focus groups. The team spoke with board members, administrators, staff, 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 BTWA from the Superintendent of New Haven and from contiguous school districts: East Haven, Hamden, North Haven, Orange, West Haven and Woodbridge. The CSDE received a letter from Jody Ian Goeler, Superintendent, Hamden Public School (see Attachment B) which is supportive of BTWA's charter renewal.

The CSDE received a letter from Mr. Robert F. Gilbert, Superintendent, Woodbridge School District (see Attachment C) which is neutral to BTWA's charter renewal.

*Public Hearing:* Erik M. Clemons, member of the SBE, and CSDE staff held a public hearing on December 13, 2016, in New Haven, and heard from 18 individuals on the potential charter renewal of BTWA and the impact it is having on the community. Public hearing participants included members of the BTWA community, including family members, students, school staff and community members. Over 76 people attended the public hearing. The responses generated during the public hearing were overwhelmingly positive, both in terms of the impact the charter school has had on the community and support for BTWA in the context of school choice. No one spoke out against the renewal of the school's charter.

### **Academic Achievement**

Accountability Index score data for BTWA is not available for charting student achievement at the school because BTWA has not yet served grades that have participated in the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC). Therefore, benchmark data based on the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) is used as a standardized measure of student progress.

As detailed in Tables 4 and 5, student growth in reading and math based on NWEA MAP, showed mixed results between Fall and Spring 2015-16.

#### **Positive Academic Achievement Indicators:**

- The Grade 2 math increase (+23 ppts.) from Fall 2015 to Spring 2016 represents substantial scaled score growth that exceeded 1.25 years of NWEA annual growth, in line with that needed for low-performing students to meet achievement targets that will close the grade level proficiency gap by the end of Grade 3.
- An improvement in the percentage of students that met the NWEA proficiency benchmarks in Reading (Kindergarten: +5 ppts.) and Math (Grade 1: +5 ppts. Grade 2: +23 ppts.) between Fall and Spring of 2015-16.

#### **Academic Achievement Areas of Concern:**

- The percentage of students that met NWEA proficiency benchmarks declined in Reading (Grade 1: -1%, Grade 2: -4%) and Math (Kindergarten: -3%) between Fall and Spring of 2015-16.
- Scaled score growth in Reading and Math, with the exception of Math for Grade 2, is not on pace to meet NWEA growth targets needed to close grade level proficiency gaps by the end of Grade 3.

### **Other Indicators**

The most recent available data and information contained in the Charter Renewal Report and Next Generation Accountability Report 2014-15 (see below) also evaluate BTWA's performance

and success in other standards including Stewardship, Governance & Management; Student Population, and Legal Compliance.

**Positive Other Indicators:**

- No significant findings, conditions or internal weaknesses were uncovered in BTWA’s most recently conducted (2015) certified financial audit.
- Certified audits and annual budgets were completed and submitted on time.
- BTWA’s accounting policies and procedures manual contain the standard sections of such manual.
- BTWA meets or exceeds the ranges recommended by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, signifying overall financial health.

**Other Indicators:**

- BTWA bylaws require amendments to comply with new CSDE administrative oversight guidelines for anti-nepotism and conflict of interest.
- To better reflect the demographics of the surrounding community, the school must reach-out to and enroll more Hispanic students and students who are English learners.
- BTWA must reduce the high rate of student chronic absenteeism.
- BTWA must reduce the number of student in-school suspensions.

**Charter Renewal Recommendation**

BTWA is a charter school with limited evidence to demonstrate it has developed a successful model resulting in strong student outcomes and a positive school climate. The alternative standardized assessment NWEA MAP has been administered between the Fall and Spring 2015-16 and Fall 2016 to students. A review of student growth on the NWEA MAP in reading and math were mixed and student rates of proficiency growth were not consistently strong across the grades and content areas. Also, NWEA MAP scaled score growth in reading and math, with the exception of Grade 2 math, show students are not on pace to meet NWEA MAP growth targets by the end of Grade 3. Growth during these years is imperative. Without remediation, students may likely struggle with reading throughout their school years.

The school culture and climate data (Table 2) show BTWA had a chronic absenteeism rate of 20.2 percent in 2015-16, which was over two times the state average of 9.6 percent. BTWA’s in-school suspension rate has remained consistently high with 48 in-school suspensions reported in 2014-15 and 50 in 2015-16. In 2015-16, the overall student suspension rate of 12.9 percent was high, exceeding state average of 6.9 percent. A high rate of suspension considering the age group raises serious concerns about school climate, direct instruction, expected school behaviors and a lack of age-appropriate amends or restitution.

Based on the BTWA’s performance indicators, together with the CSDE’s evaluation of the charter, the CSDE recommends that the SBE renew the school’s charter for a period of three years, with the knowledge that pursuant to subsection (h) of Sec.10-66bb(h), of the C.G.S., the Commissioner will place BTWA on probation and require the charter school to file a corrective action plan within the statutorily-prescribed timelines.

While the Commissioner recommends the renewal of BTWA from July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2020, the Commissioner's letter of probation, separate from this action, will include the following provisions:

1. By February 6, 2017, as required by C.G.S. § 10-66bb(h), the Commissioner shall provide written notice to BTWA of the length of and reasons for probation.
2. By February 6, 2017, as required by C.G.S. § 10-66bb(h), the Commissioner shall notify parents and guardians of students attending the school of the probationary status and the reasons for such status.
3. By March 1, 2017, 2016, BTWA shall submit a corrective action plan acceptable to the Commissioner. The corrective action plan must include measures to minimize behavioral incidents resulting in suspensions and expulsions by: (a) isolating the root causes of behavioral issues; (b) identifying interventions to target root causes; (c) strengthening school behavioral instruction and support policies as well as discipline policies and procedures; and (d) monitoring interventions and applying midcourse corrections, as necessary. The plan shall be developed in consultation with CSDE's Turnaround Office. BTWA shall implement the corrective actions within thirty days following the Commissioner's acceptance of the plan.
4. By March 1, 2017, BTWA shall submit a corrective action plan acceptable to the Commissioner. The corrective action plan must target and address chronic absenteeism by: (a) isolating the root causes of chronic absenteeism; (b) identifying interventions to target root causes; and (c) monitoring interventions and applying midcourse corrections, as necessary. The plan shall be developed in consultation with CSDE's Turnaround Office. BTWA shall implement the corrective actions within thirty days following the Commissioner's acceptance of the plan.
5. By March 1, 2017, BTWA shall submit a corrective action plan acceptable to the Commissioner. The corrective action plan must include measures to improve student academic achievement. The plan shall be developed in consultation with CSDE's Turnaround Office. BTWA shall implement the corrective actions within thirty days following the Commissioner's acceptance of the plan.
6. CSDE will, on a bi-monthly basis, review and monitor BTWA's year-to-date number of suspensions and expulsions and chronic absenteeism.
7. CSDE will conduct an interim site visit in August 2017 and March 2018, to review and monitor year-to-date number of suspensions and expulsions and chronic absenteeism.
8. BTWA must participate in relevant technical assistance organized by the CSDE.
9. In May 2018, pending State Board of Education notification, the Commissioner will evaluate BTWA's satisfaction of the foregoing issues and determine the status of BTWA's probation.

The CSDE will notify Booker T. Washington Academy of action taken by the SBE following its meeting on February 1, 2017. The school will be advised and take advantage of relevant technical assistance opportunities designed to improve its educational program. The CSDE will conduct follow-up visits to ensure that Booker T. Washington Academy addressed the issues raised in this memorandum.

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

Approved by: Desi D. Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer  
Turnaround Office

## CHARTER RENEWAL REPORT | SPRING 2016

Charter School Information:		
Charter School Name:	Booker T. Washington Academy	
School Director:	John Taylor	
School Board Chairperson:	Dr. Chaka Felder-McEntire	
Location (City/Town):	New Haven	
Rating Key:		
<b>Meets</b>	The school demonstrates effective policies and practices, resulting in positive outcomes.	
<b>Pending Action</b>	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.	
<b>Does Not Meet</b>	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:	0.3/ 100	0.3
Notes and Evidence:		
<p>The 2014-15 BTWA Accountability Index score is not complete as the school did not serve grades that participated in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). The school grew to serve grade three in the 2016-17 school year and its students will participate in the SBAC for the first time in the spring of 2017. As a result the use of BTWA's 2014-15 Accountability Index score to determine school performance is not applicable at this time.</p> <p>BTWA's 2014-15 Next Generation Accountability Report is shown in detail on the next page. While most components of the Accountability Index calculation are not reported, Chronic Absenteeism for: All Students 30.4%, and High Needs Students 29.9 % are reported. Per state average these rates are high and the school has been working since the start of 2015-16 school year to reduce the rate of Chronic Absenteeism, which it reduced for All Students to 20.2% in 2015-16, a reduction of 10.2% from 2014-15.</p>		





# Next Generation Accountability Report, 2014-15

*Choose a District*

**Booker T. Washington Academy District**

No:	Indicator	Index/ Rate	Target	Points Earned	Max Points	% Points Earned	State Avg Index/Rate
1a.	ELA Performance Index – All Students	N/A	75	0.0	0	0.0	67.9
1b.	ELA Performance Index – High Needs Students	N/A	75	0.0	0	0.0	56.7
1c.	Math Performance Index – All Students	N/A	75	0.0	0	0.0	59.3
1d.	Math Performance Index – High Needs Students	N/A	75	0.0	0	0.0	47.8
1e.	Science Performance Index – All Students	N/A	75	0.0	0	0.0	56.5
1f.	Science Performance Index – High Needs Students	N/A	75	0.0	0	0.0	45.9
4a.	Chronic Absenteeism – All Students	30.4%	<=5%	0.0	50	0.0	10.6%
4b.	Chronic Absenteeism – High Needs Students	29.9%	<=5%	0.3	50	0.5	17.3%
5	Preparation for CCR – % taking courses	N/A	75%	0.0	0	0.0	66.1%
6	Preparation for CCR – % passing exams	N/A	75%	0.0	0	0.0	37.3%
7	On-track to High School Graduation	N/A	94%	0.0	0	0.0	85.6%
8	4-year Graduation All Students (2014 Cohort)	N/A	94%	0.0	0	0.0	87.0%
9	6-year Graduation - High Needs Students (2012 Cohort)	N/A	94%	0.0	0	0.0	77.6%
10	Postsecondary Entrance (Class of 2014)	N/A	75%	0.0	0	0.0	72.8%
11	Physical Fitness (estimated part rate) and (fitness rate)	N/A   N/A	75%	0.0	0	0.0	87.6%   51.0%
12	Arts Access	N/A	60%	0.0	0	0.0	45.7%
<b>Accountability Index</b>				<b>0.3</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0.3</b>	

These statistics are the first results from Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability Model for districts and schools. For detailed information and resources about every indicator including the rationale for its inclusion, the methodology used as well as links to resources, research, and evidence-based strategies, please see the document titled Using Accountability Results to Guide Improvement.

This model is the direct result of an extensive consultation process over a two year period. The CSDE sought feedback from district and school leaders, Connecticut educators, state and national experts, CSDE staff, and many others. This model was outlined in Connecticut's flexibility application to the U.S. Department of Education and formally approved by the USED in August 2015.

Gap Indicators	Non-High Needs Rate*	High Needs Rate	Size of Gap	State Gap Mean + 1 Stdev**	Is Gap an Outlier?
Achievement Gap Size Outlier?					N
ELA Performance Index Gap	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Math Performance Index Gap	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Science Performance Index Gap	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

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

Participation Rate	Rate
ELA – All Students	N/A
ELA – High Needs Students	N/A
Math – All Students	N/A
Math – High Needs Students	N/A
Science – All Students	N/A
Science – High Needs Students	N/A

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input 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 type="checkbox"/> M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
2.5. School Facility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
<b>Notes and Evidence:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Indicator 2.1:</b> CSDE site visit staff reviewed BTWA’s most recently conducted 2015 certified financial audit and uncovered no significant findings, conditions or internal control weakness. </li> <li> <b>Indicator 2.2:</b> CSDE site visit staff reviewed BTWA’s most recently conducted 2015 certified financial audit, accounting policies and procedures manual (APPM) and budgets, interviewed the school business manager, school director and governing board members. The reviewers determined BTWA completed on-time submission of certified audits and annual budgets. Staff from CSDE’s Office of Internal Audit (OIA) determined the APPM contains the standard sections of an APPM. However, OIA staff did recommend language for employee salary advances, travel reimbursements and bank reconciliations be strengthened. The CSDE, on December 16, 2016, received BTWA’s corrective action plan and APPM amended language and found it acceptable. The BTWA Board voted and approved the APPM amendments at its January 25, 2017 meeting. </li> <li> <b>Indicator 2.3:</b> Staff from CSDE’s Office of Internal Audit reviewed BTWA’s most recently conducted 2015 certified financial audit and determined BTWA’s debt to asset ratio (total liabilities/total assets), current asset ratio (current assets / current liabilities), total margin (net income/ revenue), cash flow (change in cash balance), and days of unrestricted cash (unrestricted cash /((total expenditures – depreciation) / 365)) meets or exceeds the ranges recommended by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), signifying overall financial health. </li> <li> <b>Indicator 2.4:</b> BTWA’s policies and procedures regarding payroll, background checks of staff and board members, open board meetings and board membership training were reviewed and found to comply with state and federal laws, rules and regulation. The finding was supported by a review of payroll policy, board training records and the review of the schools website and board meeting minutes. A review of BTWA Board background checks found one board member out of 10 had not completed the background check process and is in the process of completing it. CSDE site visit staff reviewed school bylaws and determined they require amending to comply with new CSDE administrative oversight guidelines for anti-nepotism and conflict of interest. On December 28, 2016, the CSDE submitted its review of the bylaws including suggested revisions to the school. BTWA’s Board submitted the amended bylaws to the CSDE on January 4, 2017. Once reviewed and approved by CSDE the BTWA Board will act to approve. </li> <li> <b>Indicator 2.5:</b> As evidenced by the site visit, BTWA has a safe and well-maintained school facility to support quality teaching and learning. Evidence included proof of property insurance, an approved New Haven Fire Marshal inspection and approved certificate of occupancy issued by the New Haven Building Department for the facility. </li> </ul>	

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 type="checkbox"/> M <input checked="" 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
<b>Notes and Evidence:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Indicator 3.1</b> Currently BTWA serves 241 students in Grades K-3 with 88 percent residing in New Haven and the remaining 12 percent residing in five surrounding districts, East Haven, Hamden, Middletown, North Haven and West Haven. A review of the school’s student enrollment policy, and interviews with school staff, board members and parents determined all New Haven students are admitted through a blind lottery conducted by New Haven Public Schools. If there are seats unfilled after the New Haven lottery is complete, a separate lottery is held for out of district students. </li> <li> <b>Indicator 3.2:</b> A review of BTWA’s waitlist information (Table 3 page 11) determined it maintains a small waitlist of families beyond the available number of seats. In 2016-17, 15 students were on the waiting list. The waitlist has continued to grow since the school opened in 2014-15 with no waitlist. The October 2016 student enrollment (241) is 99.6 percent of the 2016-17 projected student enrollment. </li> <li> <b>Indicator 3.3:</b> A review of BTWA’s 2015-16 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports students from minority groups represent 97.8 percent of BTWA’s student population and 85.6 percent of students qualify for free and reduced-price meals. The percentage of special education students at BTWA is 6.1 percent, 11 percent are Hispanic there are no students identified as English learners. To better reflect the demographics of the surrounding community, the school must seek to enroll more Hispanic students and students who are English learners. </li> <li> <b>Indicator 3.4:</b> While BTWA is a new charter school beginning its third year of operation it demonstrates strong community support as evidenced by the interviews of 9 parents of BTWA students by CSDE staff during the on-site visit. All described the communication between the school and families as strong. All expressed support for what they perceive is a rigorous curriculum and the school’s dedication to ensuring each child’s needs are met. Over 76 individuals attended the December 13, 2016, public hearing and 18 individuals offered testimony supporting the school’s efforts and the renewal of its charter. </li> <li> <b>Indicator 3.5:</b> A review of BTWA’s overall student suspension and chronic absenteeism data (Table 2 page 11) show improvement over the year. In 2015-16, the overall student suspension rate was 12.9 percent, down from 14.1 percent in 2014-15. The student chronic absenteeism rate was 20.2 percent in 2015-16, down from 30.4 percent in 2014-15 and the student average daily attendance rate of 93.9 percent in 2015-16 improved from 92.0 percent in 2014-15. While the rates of student suspension and chronic absenteeism have improved since the school opened, the rates are high when compared to the state averages of 6.9 percent and 9.6 percent respectively. Also, while the average daily attendance rate has improved since the school opened, the 2015-16 rate is below the state goal of 95.0 percent. BTWA must take measures to remedy and address behavior management and student attendance going forward. The CSDE Turnaround Office will work with the school to assist in these efforts. </li> </ul>	

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	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.6. Employee Rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM

**Notes and Evidence:**

- 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 agenda are posted on the school’s website. Education records and testing data are secured in locked file cabinets in the BTWA Director of Academics/Principal’s office.
- Indicator 4.2:** A review of BTWA’s 2015-16 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports the percentage of special education students at BTWA was 6.1 percent. A review of student records and interviews with the BTWA Director of Academics/Principal and the special education teacher were conducted to determine how the school meets the needs of students with disabilities.

PPT meetings are joint endeavors including the BTWA Director of Academics and the special education teacher and district of residence administrator and other appropriate staff from the district of residence. Discussions regarding the development and revisions of IEPs are common practice at BTWA and include meetings with parents. Once evaluations have been conducted by the district of residence, BTWA will reconvene the PPT to review results of evaluations and to make recommendations. Based on these recommendations, BTWA will respond as required to meet the student’s needs.

As evidenced by student file reviews and interviews the special education students at BTWA are receiving specialized instruction and related services as set forth in their IEPs. The students receiving special education services are served by a full-time certified special education teacher and the provision of related services (e.g. speech and language, physical therapy and counseling) are provided by the district of residence. BTWA students with IEPs are typically integrated into the general classroom environment with occasional pull-outs for more specialized instruction. Services are provided in the least restrictive environment with appropriate inclusion in the school’s academic program, assessments (with appropriate accommodations), and extracurricular activities. All students with IEPs are in a general education class.

As evidenced by portfolios of student work, curriculum based formative assessments, and work with the special education teacher, it was determined the assessments were aligned to IEP goals. The majority of these students are making satisfactory progress on the short-term IEP objectives and annual goals. Standards-based assessments are used to assess all students including special education student progress toward annual goals. Teachers of special education students monitor progress toward short-term IEP objectives

- **Indicator 4.3:** Classroom observations and staff interviews by the CSDE English Learner (EL) consultant during the site visit determined that the school does not currently have any identified English learners. A review of BTWA’s English learner policies and procedures determined amendments were required to fully align to CSDE guidelines. The school submitted the policy amendments on December 16, 2016. They have been reviewed by CSDE staff and determined to meet CSDE guidelines.

Subsequent to the CSDE site visit, BTWA amended its Home Language Survey (HLS) and re-issued it to the home of every student attending the school. All students of families that identify a primary language other than English used in the home will be tested to evaluate language proficiency. The parents of students identified as English learners will be informed by BTWA of the service options for their child and opt in to the service that the child will receive.

- **Indicator 4.4:** BTWA 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:** Staff from the CSDE Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification compared the state certified staff file to the school’s employee roster and found two out of 20 with certification issues. The school has developed corrective action plans with the two staff to remedy certification issues.
- **Indicator 4.6:** A review of BTWA employment policies and procedures and an interview with the school director determined the school’s hiring and employment practices ensure protections under the Family Medical Leave Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Civil Rights Act of 1964 and affirmative action and equal opportunity employment.

<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>Approved by:</b>
Robert Kelly, Charter School Program Manager	Desi D. Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer

## Booker T. Washington Academy

<b>Table 1. 2015 16 Student Enrollment and Demographic Information</b>	
Grades served:	K-2
Total enrollment:	180
Percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price meals:	85.6%
Percentage of special education students:	6.1%
Percentage of students with limited English proficiency:	0.0%
Percentage of minority students:	97.8%
Percentage of Asian students:	0
Percentage of Black students:	86.7%
Percentage of Hispanic students:	11.1%
Percentage of Caucasian students:	**

<b>Table 2: School Culture and Climate Data</b>			
<b>Performance Metric:</b>	<b>2013-14:</b>	<b>2014-15:</b>	<b>2015-16:</b>
Average daily attendance rate:	N/A	92.0%	93.9%
Chronic absenteeism rate:	N/A	30.4%	20.2%
Number of in-school suspensions:	N/A	48	50
Number of out-of-school suspensions:	N/A	26	2
Suspension rate (percentage of students with 1+ suspension):	N/A	14.1%	12.9%
Number of expulsions:	N/A	0	0
Cohort graduation rate (if applicable):	N/A	N/A	N/A
Six Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (if applicable):	N/A	N/A	N/A

\*Source: CSDE analysis based on district submitted and certified data

\*\*N<=5. Suppressed to protect student confidentiality.

<b>Table 3: Student Waitlist and Mobility Information</b>			
<b>Performance Metric:</b>	<b>2014-15:</b>	<b>2015-16:</b>	<b>2016-17:</b>
Waitlist number:	0	2	15
Number of enrolled students who left during the school year:	2	4	N/A
Number of students who did not re-enroll the next year and had not completed the highest grade at the school:	8	11	N/A

**Table 4: 2015 16 Reading Performance**

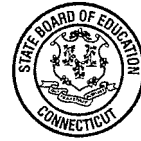
Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)							
Reading	Total Sample	Fall 2015 % Proficiency (#)	Total Sample	Spring 2016 % Proficiency (#)	Growth	Total Sample	Fall 2016 % Proficiency (#)
Kindergarten	85	36% (31)	85	41% (35)	5 pts.	83	45% (37)
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	51	34% (17)	49	33% (16)	-1 pts.	75	40% (30)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	42	37% (16)	42	33% (14)	-4 pts.	50	30% (15)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade						31	58% (18)

**Table 5: 2015 16 Math Performance**

Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)							
Reading	Total Sample	Fall 2015 % Proficiency (#)	Total Sample	Spring 2016 % Proficiency (#)	Growth	Total Sample	Fall 2016 % Proficiency (#)
Kindergarten	85	36% (31)	83	33% (27)	-3 pts.	83	27% (22)
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	51	44% (22)	49	49% (24)	5 pts.	75	33% (25)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	42	29% (12)	42	52% (22)	23 pts.	50	32% (16)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade						32	28% (9)



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION



**TO:** Accountability and Support Committee  
**FROM:** Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education  
**DATE:** March 14, 2016  
**SUBJECT:** Update on Booker T. Washington Academy Charter School

**Background**

On August 4, 2014, pursuant to Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, the State Board of Education approved the Commissioner's recommendation to grant the Booker T. Washington Academy (BTWA) charter for the period July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2017, subject to the conditions specified in the attached resolution approved by the Board. The following will serve as a first year report of BTWA's academic, financial and operational systems and performance.

In 2014-15, BTWA began its first year of operation. The school served ninety-one students in Grades K-1. Eighty-nine percent of its students resided in the city of New Haven, the host district, 6 percent resided in Hamden, and 5 percent resided in West Haven. BTWA added a Grade 2 to its school in the 2015-16 school year, for a total of 180 students. The school reported thirty students on its 2015-16 enrollment waitlist.

**Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Oversight**

During the 2014-15 school year the CSDE conducted four visits to the school: two prior to the school opening and two while the school was in operation. Prior to the school opening, the CSDE reviewed documentation relating to facility requirements, including safety, liability and insurance certificates. CSDE further reviewed: (1) documentation relating to governing board members and background checks of all board members and staff, (2) the school's five-year budget and financial policies and procedures, and (3) a contract the school negotiated with a financial service provider to handle the school's back office work, including payroll processing, accounting and financial reporting. BTWA's governing board participated in a board development training sponsored by CSDE and conducted by the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE).

**Curriculum and Instruction**

The school established its curriculum founded on Connecticut's rigorous state standards and the Common Core State Standards. Instruction is provided by certified staff with expertise in the areas they teach. The school's early reading curriculum and instruction is predicated on decoding, fluency and comprehension. Teachers work with students in small guided groups. Students are placed in groups based on their performance on reading assessments, providing targeted instruction to meet student needs. Student groupings are flexible and adjusted regularly depending on student progress. Literacy is also embedded in social studies and science. In total, students participate in three-and-one-half hours of literacy-focused instruction, including one hour dedicated to writing each day.



BTWA provides sixty minutes of mathematics instruction each day for kindergarten students and ninety minutes of mathematics instruction each day for Grades 1 and 2, aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The program focuses on computational fluency, mathematical reasoning and developing a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. As with literacy, teachers work with students in small guided groups. Students are placed in groups based on their performance on math assessments, providing targeted instruction to meet student needs. These student groupings are also flexible and adjusted regularly depending on student progress.

Teaching staff were provided laptop computers to assist in lesson planning and access to the school's student information system. Twenty-four Chromebooks were purchased in the 2014-15 school year for student testing and providing students access to learning software. In 2015-16, BTWA purchased Smart Board computers for every classroom and plans to purchase twenty-four additional Chromebooks for students.

To ensure teachers were prepared to deliver high quality instruction to students, the following professional development opportunities were offered over a three-week period in the summer: Understanding Common Core learning standards, development of curriculum aligned to Common Core State Standards, curriculum improvement, lesson planning, use and development of student assessments, classroom management and school climate training, and multicultural curriculum training.

### **Special Education Services**

Currently BTWA employs a certified special education teacher serving the needs of 10 students with disabilities. BTWA and New Haven Public Schools (NHPS) are in the process of finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding respective responsibilities, payment and provision of free appropriate public education services to NHPS students attending BTWA identified as having a disability. The MOU ensures the provision of special education and related services to students having or who are suspected of having a disability that requires special education and related services. A draft of the MOU has been reviewed by CSDE staff to ensure compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

### **Extended School Day Programs**

To better serve the needs of the families and community, the school offers a before-and after-school program that extends the school day by nearly four hours each day. The before school program begins at 6:45 a.m. School hours are 7:30 a.m. to 3:40 p.m. The after school program ends at 6:30 p.m. Extended school day program activities include homework assistance, tutoring, arts and crafts, technology, physical activities and club activities.

### **Summer School Program**

BTWA operates a three-week summer learning opportunity for students. The program is open to all students, but mandatory for targeted populations that are at-risk of retention at the current grade level. The BTWA Summer Academy is an extension of the regular school year program, focusing primarily on teaching reading and mathematics. Students receive targeted instruction to meet their needs in decoding, reading comprehension, writing, and mathematics. Additionally, students participate in music, art and physical activities each day.

## Educational Progress

BTWA uses a variety of assessments to measure student performance throughout the school year. The school measures literacy growth using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2) and Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments. BTWA measures numeracy growth by using the Early Numeracy Interview (ENI), and NWEA MAP assessments. Individual student performance is formatively assessed using NWEA progress monitoring tools, running records completed weekly, ongoing curriculum-based assessments, and ongoing unit observation checklists completed by the school’s literacy coach. BTWA is in the process of implementing performance-based assessments three times annually for literacy and mathematics. The assessments are designed to prepare students for administration of the state’s Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium summative assessments.

Overall, BTWA reports kindergarten and first grade students performed better on the NWEA in the spring of 2015 than they had in winter of 2014. In both reading and math, the school’s kindergarten and first grade students exhibited consistent student growth in achieving proficiency and above on the NWEA. Tables 1 and 2 measure growth in the percentage of kindergarten and first grade students achieving at or above proficiency on the NWEA in reading and math.

**Student Performance Growth: 2014 to 2015**

Table 1				Table 2			
NWEA Reading	Winter % at Benchmark	Spring % at Benchmark	Growth	NWEA Math	Winter % at Benchmark	Spring % at Benchmark	Growth
K	27%	58%	31%	K	21%	52%	31%
1	26%	41%	15%	1	20%	26%	6%

## Financial Viability

During the 2014-15 school year, BTWA raised \$850,000 in private contributions to support its 2014-15 operation and ended the school year with approximately \$350,000. This end of the year balance reduced summer school costs and accounts payable by approximately \$220,000, leaving the school with a carryover balance of approximately \$130,000.

The 2015-16 approved budget projects private contributions of \$550,000. The school currently has commitments of \$860,000 in private contributions and has collected \$560,000 to date.

## Governance

BTWA has an established governing board composed of a broad cross-section of the school community and community-at-large, including a parent, teacher and a NHPS Board of Education representative. The BTWA Board provides oversight of the school, meeting monthly, while facilitating its work through various committees that include academic, finance and fundraising. The Board’s oversight responsibilities include: (1) establishing school policies and procedures; (2) approving and monitoring the annual budget and school finances; (3) fundraising; (4) hiring and evaluating the Executive Director; and (5) strategic planning.

To enhance the Board’s oversight of the school, it participated in various board trainings, including board development training sponsored by CSDE and conducted by CUBE, the Northeast Charter Schools Network, and Shipman and Goodwin, Attorneys at Law.

**Back Office Services**

BTWA opted not to renew its 2014-15 back office contract and has recently contracted with a new financial services provider. The new provider offers a team of consultants with a wealth of experience including over one hundred charter school clients and related organizations. As with the former contract, the CSDE reviewed the new contract and provided feedback to BTWA. Based on CSDE recommended changes incorporating good business practices, the charter school revised the contract accordingly. The contract details the scope of financial support services including ongoing reporting and approvals moving through BTWA's governing board.

**Conclusion**

BTWA's performance over the 2014-15 school year demonstrates its capacity and commitment to successfully operate a charter school. The school and its board have been receptive to the CSDE's requests and updates. The CSDE looks forward to working with the school as it continues to serve its students, families and community.

Prepared by: Robert E. Kelly, Charter School Program Manager  
Bureau of Choice Programs

Reviewed by: Mark Linabury, Chief  
Bureau of Choice Programs

Approved by: Charlene Russell-Tucker  
Chief Operating Officer

(Revised 8/4/14)

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford

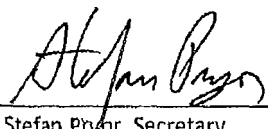
**TO BE PROPOSED:**  
August 4, 2014

RESOLVED, That pursuant to section 4-181a (b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, the State Board of Education (SBE), finds that, based on the evidence presented at the hearing in this matter on August 4, 2014, a change in conditions has been demonstrated, and hereby modifies the conditions imposed in its April 2, 2014, grant of a state charter to Booker T. Washington Academy (BTWA), pursuant to Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes; and be it further

RESOLVED, That in lieu of the conditions imposed in the April 2, 2014 granting of the BTWA state charter, the SBE approves the Commissioner's recommendation to grant the BTWA charter for the period July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2017, subject to the following terms and conditions: (a) require BTWA to report to the SBE on the first year of school operations by September 2015; (b) adjust the seat allocation for BTWA from 225 to 120 seats for the 2014-15 school year; and (c) require BTWA to participate in regular site visits conducted by the Turnaround and Charter School Offices, other monitoring processes, and technical assistance, as necessary; and the SBE authorizes the Commissioner to release the charter, which shall be subject to conditions (a), (b), and (c) referenced above, when the Commissioner, with the concurrence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, determines that the conditions regarding charter release, as listed in the fifth-numbered paragraph on page 3 of the Commissioner's August 4, 2014, memorandum to the SBE, have been satisfied, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of 7:0 this fourth day of August, Two Thousand Fourteen.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Stefan Pryor, Secretary  
State Board of Education

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford

**TO:** State Board of Education

**FROM:** Stefan Pryor, Commissioner of Education

**DATE:** August 4, 2014

**SUBJECT:** Recommendation to Modify the Conditions Imposed in the State Board of Education's Decision to Grant a State Charter to Booker T. Washington Academy and to Adjust the School's Seat Allocation for the 2014-15 School Year

**Background**

On April 2, 2014, pursuant to Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.), the State Board of Education (SBE) approved the application of Booker T. Washington Academy (BTWA) to become a state charter school. On June 4, 2014, the SBE, in accordance with C.G.S. § 10-66bb(c), approved the distribution of 8,183 seats to state charter schools and 63 seats to a local charter school for the 2014-15 school year. Of the 8,183 seats, the SBE approved 225 seats for BTWA.

***A. Changed Condition***

The SBE's approval and grant of the BTWA charter were subject to, among other conditions, "[a] signed contract between the governing council of the proposed charter school and the identified non-profit organization responsible for whole-school management services, including a fee structure. The contract must be submitted and approved by the Commissioner prior to the school opening." The application submitted by BTWA on January 24, 2014 identified Family Urban Schools of Excellence, Inc. (FUSE) as the non-profit charter school management organization (CMO). On June 29, 2014, however, the BTWA governing board elected to end its relationship with FUSE and move forward as an independent governing board without the support of a CMO. As a result, BTWA cannot open as a state charter school unless its charter is amended.

Section 4-181a(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes allows an agency to modify a final decision at any time at the request of any person or on the agency's own motion upon a showing of changed conditions. The change in conditions here include the determination of BTWA not to enter into a contract with FUSE, as will be addressed by BTWA at the hearing, and the revised enrollment plan submitted by BTWA.

***B. Revised Enrollment Plan***

The BTWA charter permits the school to serve students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8. On June 4, 2014, the SBE approved 225 seats for the school's inaugural year. On July 21, 2014,

however, the CSDE received a letter from BTWA notifying the Department of the school's intention to revise its enrollment plan for the 2014-15 school year. Under the new plan, beginning in fall 2014, the school would open with 120 students in Grades K through 1. In future years, with the SBE's approval and subject to the availability of appropriations, the school would expand to offer a rigorous instructional program for students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8.

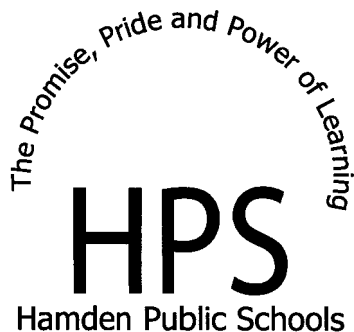
### **Recommendation**

Though BTWA has abandoned its plans to contract with a CMO for the provision of whole-school management services, the BTWA team has successfully maintained the overall quality, feasibility, and reasonableness of its proposed program. The likelihood of BTWA opening and operating a high-quality public school is as strong as any other approved charter school in its start-up phase, as evidenced by the following: (a) BTWA has revised its school calendar to accommodate a proposed September 15, 2014 start date and has requested that the SBE reduce its 2014-15 enrollment to 120 students; (b) as of July 26, 2014, BTWA has accepted applications from 74 prospective students and has developed a strong student recruitment plan; (c) BTWA has recruited several teachers and hired an experienced educator and leader to serve as the school's Executive Director and Founding Principal; (d) BTWA has identified a suitable temporary facility to use while its long-term facility undergoes repairs and renovations; (e) BTWA has forged partnerships with New Haven Public Schools regarding shared operational services and Yardstick Learning to provide specific back-office services; and (f) BTWA has strengthened and clarified its proposed academic program and instructional philosophy by adopting E.D. Hirsch's Core Knowledge Sequence as its primary curriculum and selecting research-based programs for early language development and mathematics. BTWA has also entered into a strategic partnership with Achievement First for the purposes of sharing curriculum documents, including lesson plans and assessments, and learning best practices.

In light of BTWA's demonstrated commitment and capacity, as well as the timeline for achieving a successful school opening this September, the CSDE offers five recommendations for the SBE's consideration and approval. The following recommendations are designed to enable BTWA to open in September 2014 with necessary measures and supports to ensure that BTWA is a high-quality public school:

- 1) Amend the BTWA charter by removing the condition that BTWA contract with FUSE and by changing the term of the charter from five years to three years, for the period July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2017;
- 2) Require BTWA to report to the SBE by September 2015, regarding the first year of the state charter school's academic, financial, and operational systems and performance;
- 3) Adjust BTWA's seat allocation from 225 to 120 seats for the 2014-15 school year;

- 4) Require BTWA to participate in regular CSDE site visits, other monitoring processes, and technical assistance, as necessary, so that the CSDE through its Turnaround and Charter School Offices can provide intensive and periodic assistance to ensure high-quality operations at BTWA; and
  
- 5) Authorize the Commissioner to release the charter when the Commissioner determines that the following conditions are met: (a) receipt of sufficient funding from the General Assembly and written assurances of philanthropic donations and other financing sufficient to meet the school's operating needs for the first year of school; (b) receipt of documentation relating to facility requirements, including safety, liability, and insurance certifications; (c) receipt of documentation relating to incorporation status and identification of governing board members in accordance with C.G.S. § 10-66bb(d)(3)(A); and (d) receipt of documentation validating that BTWA has conducted background checks of all school employees and governing board members in a manner consistent with C.G.S. § 10-221d. These conditions would replace the original conditions in the BTWA charter.



Jody Ian Goeler, Superintendent  
Christopher C. Melillo, Assistant Superintendent

December 14, 2016

Desi D. Nesmith  
Chief Turnaround Officer  
State Department of Education  
P.O. Box 2219  
Hartford, CT 06145

Dear Desi Nesmith,

In accordance with Section 10-66bb(f) of the Connecticut General Statutes, please accept this letter as my recommendation to renew the charter for the Booker T. Washington Academy located in New Haven.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jody Ian Goeler", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jody Ian Goeler  
Superintendent of Schools



# WOODBIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

40 Beecher Road – South  
Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525



Robert F. Gilbert – Superintendent  
Clare Kennedy – Special Services Director | Alfred Pullo, Jr. – Director of Business Services/Operations


December 12, 2016

Mr. Robert Kelly  
Charter School Program Manager  
Connecticut State Department of Education  
P.O. Box 2219  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Mr. Kelly:

I am responding to the request from Desi D. Nesmith soliciting comments on the renewal of Booker T. Washington Academy in New Haven. I know of no reason nor can I provide any comments, which reflect poorly on the Booker T. Washington Academy. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Robert F. Gilbert  
Superintendent

RFG/med