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**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford**

**TO:** State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Desi D. Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer  
Sarah J. Barzee, Chief Talent Officer  
**DATE:** January 3, 2018  
**SUBJECT:** Update on Achievement First Bridgeport Academy, Amistad Academy, and Elm City College Preparatory School

*Executive Summary*

**Purpose**

This is an update to the Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE) on the efforts and progress being made on reducing suspensions and certification compliance within Achievement First Bridgeport Academy, Amistad Academy, and Elm City College Preparatory School. The update was requested by CSBE as part of the three year charter renewal that the three schools received on March 1, 2017.

**Background**

On March 1, 2017, pursuant to Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, the CSBE approved the charter renewal of Achievement First Bridgeport Academy, Amistad Academy, and Elm City College Preparatory School for the period July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2020, subject to (a) the conditions noted in the resolution approved by the CSBE and (b) the submission of a satisfactory report concerning the three schools certification compliance at the board's January meeting.

By May 1, 2017, each school submitted its corrective action plan for Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) review and approval to (a) bring its staff into certification compliance and (b) minimize behavioral incidents resulting in suspensions and expulsions by adopting a restorative discipline model for each school.

CSDE staff from the Turnaround Office and Talent Office met with school representatives on three occasions, May 22, 2017, June 13, 2017, and October 2, 2017 to discuss corrective action plan progress related to suspensions and certification.

All suspension data is self-reported. Suspension data will be confirmed by the CSDE in fall 2018. Certification data is from the CSDE Certification Office.

## Student Suspension Issues

### Achievement First Bridgeport Academy (AFBA)

1. Renewal Requirement:

Going forward, AFBA must reduce its suspension rate. AFBA's 2016-17 suspension rate of 18.6 percent exceeds the state average of 7.0 percent and Bridgeport's average of 15.4 percent.

2. Suspension Corrective Action Plan Goal:

2016-17 Actual	2017-18 Goal	2018-19 Goal	2019-20 Goal
18.6%	17%	15%	13%

3. Current Status:

AFBA ended the 2016-17 school year with a suspension rate of 18.6 percent. As of December 1, 2017, AFBA reports an interim suspension rate of 6.0 percent.

### Amistad Academy

1. Renewal Requirement:

Going forward, Amistad must reduce its suspension rate. Amistad's 2016-17 suspension rate of 25.5 percent exceeds the state average of 7.0 percent and New Haven's average of 8.2 percent.

2. Suspension Corrective Action Plan Goal:

2016-17 Actual	2017-18 Goal	2018-19 Goal	2019-20 Goal
25.5%	21%	17%	13%

3. Current Status:

Amistad ended the 2016-17 school year with a suspension rate of 25.5 percent. As of December 1, 2017, Amistad reports an interim suspension rate of 9.2 percent.

### Elm City College Preparatory School (ECCP)

1. Renewal Requirement:

Going forward, ECCP must reduce its suspension rate. ECCP's 2016-17 suspension rate of 16.4 percent exceeds the state average of 7.0 percent and New Haven's average of 8.2 percent.

2. Suspension Corrective Action Plan Goal:

2016-17 Actual	2017-18 Goal	2018-19 Goal	2019-20 Goal
16.4%	15%	13%	12%

3. Current Status:  
ECCP ended the 2016-17 school year with a suspension rate of 16.4 percent. As of December 1, 2017, ECCP reports an interim suspension rate of 6.7 percent.

## **Teacher Certification Issues**

### Achievement First Bridgeport Academy

1. Renewal Requirement:  
AFBA must bring its staff into certification compliance. At the time of the on-site renewal visit, 60 percent (46 staff) were properly certified, whereas, 40 percent (31 staff) were out of compliance. The school was cited for non-certified staff during its last renewal in June 2012.
2. Corrective Action Plan:  
By December 1, 2017, AFBA aims to reach 90 percent certification compliance with clear plans in place to address the remaining 10 percent of cases (e.g., enrollment in a program that will result in certification by the end of the school year).
3. Current Status:  
As of December 5, 2017, AFBA reached 75 percent certification compliance (60 out of 80 staff), whereas 25 percent (20 out of 80 staff) were out of compliance. Of those staff in compliance, 16 percent (13 staff) held Charter School Education Permits (CSEPs).

### Amistad Academy

1. Renewal Requirement:  
Amistad must bring its staff into certification compliance. At the time of the on-site renewal visit, 72 percent (95 staff) were properly certified, whereas, 28 percent (37 staff) were out of compliance. The school was cited for non-certified staff during its last renewal in June 2012.
2. Corrective Action Plan:  
By December 1, 2017, Amistad Academy aims to reach 90 percent certification compliance with clear plans in place to address the remaining 10 percent of cases (e.g. enrollment in a program that will result in certification by the end of the school year).
3. Current Status:  
As of December 5, 2017, Amistad reached 83 percent certification compliance (121 out of 145 staff), whereas 17 percent (24 out of 145 staff) were out of compliance. Of those staff in compliance, 20 percent (29 staff) held CSEPs.

Elm City College Preparatory School

1. Renewal Requirement:

ECCP must bring its staff into certification compliance. At the time of the on-site renewal visit, 49 percent (38 staff) were properly certified, whereas, 51 percent (40 staff) were out of compliance. The school was cited for non-certified staff during its last renewal in June 2012.

2. Corrective Action Plan:

By December 1, 2017, Elm City College Prep aims to reach 90 percent certification compliance with clear plans in place to address the remaining 10 percent of cases (e.g., enrollment in a program that will result in certification by the end of the school year).

3. Current Status:

As of December 5, 2017, Elm City reached 92 percent certification compliance (61 out of 66 staff), whereas eight percent (5 out of 66 staff) were out of compliance. Of those staff in compliance, 24 percent (16 staff) held CSEPs.

**Next Steps and Recommendation**

The CSDE proposes that Achievement First comes before the SBE if the self-reported data is not aligned with the state certified data released in the fall of 2018 or if targets are not met in any area of the corrective action plan.

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