

VI.B.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Hartford

TO BE PROPOSED:

March 4, 2020

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of Common Ground High School from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2023, subject to the Commissioner's March 4, 2020, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____, this fourth day of March, Two Thousand and Twenty.

Signed: _____
Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Secretary
State Board of Education

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Commissioner of Education

DATE: March 4, 2020

SUBJECT: Renewal of State Charter – Common Ground High School, New Haven

Executive Summary

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, 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

Common Ground High School (Common Ground) opened in the fall of 1997, and is currently operating in its twenty-third year. The latest CSDE audited student enrollment data from 2018-19 reported 216 students in Grades 9-12 with 72.7 percent residing in New Haven (the host district), 7.9 percent residing in Hamden, 5.6 percent residing in West Haven, 3.7 residing in East Haven and 10.1 percent residing in 14 area towns. Common Ground has a maximum approved student enrollment of 230 seats. Table 1, on page 12, of the attached Charter Renewal Report provides 2018-19 student enrollment and demographic data. Sixty-two point five percent of Common Ground students qualify for free or reduced price meals and 22.7 percent of the students receive special education services. The mission of Common Ground is to “graduate students with the knowledge, skills, and understanding to live healthy, powerful, and productive lives.”

Charter Renewal Process

Application for Renewal of Charter: The CSDE accepted an application for the renewal of Common Ground’s charter on September 6, 2019. 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. Common Ground 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 (ELs), school management, finance, and school governance reviewed the renewal application and requested clarification and additional information, where necessary.

Renewal Site Visit: On September 24, 2019, the CSDE renewal team conducted an on-site visit at Common Ground. The purpose of the on-site visit was to observe Common Ground’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 the 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 charter 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 Common Ground from the Superintendent of New Haven Public Schools and from contiguous school districts: East Haven, Hamden, North Haven, Orange, West Haven and Woodbridge. The CSDE received a letter from State Representative, Toni Walker supporting the school’s efforts to create a sustainable environment, protect natural resources, and commending their efforts to bring fresh food items into neighborhoods through their mobile farmer’s market (see Attachment A).

Public Hearing: Robert Trefry, member of the SBE, and CSDE staff held a public hearing on October 10, 2019, in the City of New Haven and heard from individuals on the potential charter renewal of Common Ground and the impact it is having on the community. Public hearing participants included members of the Common Ground community, including family members, students, school staff and community members. Over 130 people attended the public hearing. Thirty individuals offered testimony supporting the school's efforts and the renewal of the charter. No one spoke against the renewal of the school's charter.

Site Visit Findings

The most recent available data and information contained in the Charter Renewal Report (beginning on page 5), indicates Common Ground's performance according to the four performance standards. The report highlights school strengths and areas for continued growth.

Strengths include:

- No significant findings, conditions, or internal weaknesses were uncovered in Common Ground High's last certified financial audit.
- Overall, the student body reflects the demographics of the surrounding community.
- The school demonstrates strong community support as evidenced by testimony provided by individuals at the public hearing and interviews with parents during the site visit.
- Common Ground's website and Governing Board documents demonstrate that the Governing Board meetings are open and accessible to the public.
- The school's chronic absenteeism rate has improved from 15.5 percent in 2017-18 to 12.6 percent in 2018-19, slightly higher than the state's chronic absenteeism rate of 10.4 percent.
- Common Ground's suspension rate has decreased from 7.9 percent in 2017-18 to 6.8 percent in 2018-19, nearing the state's 6.7 percent suspension rate and below New Haven's rate of 7.3.
- Over the last three years, the school has exceeded the state testing participation rate of 95 percent in ELA and Mathematics for all students and High Needs students. It is noteworthy to acknowledge that 100 percent of all students and High Needs students participated in the SAT for ELA and Mathematics in 2016-17 and 2018-19.
- According to the 2018-19 Next Generation Accountability Index, Common Ground's 4-year Graduation – All Students (2018 Cohort), rate of 91.9 percent is above the state average of 88.3 percent.
- Common Ground's 6-year Graduation - High Needs (2016 Cohort), rate of 92.6 percent is above the state average of 83.3 percent.

Areas of Concern:

- The 2018-19 Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) percentage of Common Ground students achieving at or above proficiency (level 3 and 4) in ELA, (Table 4) is 26.8 percent. This is 7.5 percentage points below New Haven's 34.3 percent and 34.8 percentage points below the state average of 61.6 percent. It is important to note that there was a 31 percentage point decrease in Common Ground's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), ELA achievement from 57.8 percent in 2017-18 to 26.8 percent in 2018-19.
- For 2018-19, the percentage of Common Ground students achieving at or above proficiency (level 3 and 4) on the SAT in Mathematics is suppressed to protect confidentiality. The SAT Mathematics scale score is 412, which is substantially below the minimum of 530, the College and Career Readiness Benchmarks for SAT, and the state average of 500. A score of 412 indicates that students are on average performing between Level 1 (200-410) and Level 2 (420-520). Common Ground's average score in 2018-19 was 55 points lower than the average score of 467 in 2017-18.

Charter Renewal Recommendation

Common Ground provides a public high school choice option focused on environmental and social justice learning. The school's culture and climate data reports student suspension and chronic absenteeism rates have decreased over the last two years, approaching the state averages. Common Ground's 6-year Graduation Rate of high needs (2015 Cohort), rate of 92.6 percent is above the state average. However, Common Ground students achieving at or above proficiency on the 2018-19, SAT in ELA and Mathematics show a significant decrease in achievement compared to 2017-18. Acknowledging that Common Ground's performance indicators are not without weakness, the CSDE recommends that the SBE renew the school's charter for a period of three years, subject to the following condition:

- 1) By April 3, 2020, Common Ground shall submit a corrective action plan acceptable to the Commissioner. The corrective action plan must include measures to improve student academic achievement. Additionally, Common Ground shall submit to the CSDE, on a bi-monthly basis, beginning October 2020, a report monitoring its year-to-date progress of improving student academic achievement. The plan shall be developed in consultation with CSDE's Turnaround Office. Common Ground shall implement the corrective actions within thirty days following the Commissioner's acceptance of the plan.

The CSDE will notify Common Ground High School of action taken by the SBE following its meeting on March 4, 2020. The school will be advised of relevant technical assistance opportunities designed to improve its educational program. The CSDE will conduct follow-up visits to ensure Common Ground is addressing the issues raised in this memorandum.

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

Reviewed by: Lisa Lamenzo, Bureau Chief
Turnaround Office

Approved by: Desi D. Nesmith, Deputy Commissioner
of Academics and Innovation

CHARTER RENEWAL REPORT | 2020

| Charter School Information: | | | |
|--|---|------------|-----------------|
| Charter School Name: | Common Ground High School | | |
| School Director: | Liz Cox | | |
| School Board Chairperson: | Wendy Battles, Robert Parker | | |
| Location (City/Town): | New Haven | | |
| Rating Key: | | | |
| Meets | The school demonstrates effective policies and practices, resulting in positive outcomes. | | |
| Pending Action | 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. | | |
| Does Not Meet | 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: | | 944.8/1450 | 65.2 |
| Notes and Evidence: | | | |
| Common Ground High School’s 2018-19 Accountability Index of 65.2, is below average when compared to the state school Accountability Index of 74.2. Schools that meet Standard 1: are schools earning an accountability index from 85 to 100, (Category 1) schools earning an accountability index from 70 to 84.9, (Category 2) and schools earning an accountability index of 69.9 or lower and have not been identified as a Turnaround or Focus School, (Category 3) . Common Ground’s Accountability Index score of 65.2 places its performance in Category 3, which earns a Pending Action for Standard 1. Common Ground’s 2018-19 Next Generation Accountability Report shown in detail on the next page. | | | |

Next Generation Accountability, 2018-19
Common Ground High School (Grades: 9-12)
School Category: 3

| Indicator | Index/Rate | Target | Points Earned | Max Points | % Points Earned | State Average % Points Earned |
|---|------------|--------|---------------|------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1a. ELA Performance Index - All Students | 43.4 | 75 | 86.8 | 150 | 57.9 | 90.2 |
| 1b. ELA Performance Index - High Needs Students | 41.1 | 75 | 82.2 | 150 | 54.8 | 77.5 |
| 1c. Math Performance Index - All Students | 38.3 | 75 | 76.6 | 150 | 51.1 | 84.1 |
| 1d. Math Performance Index - High Needs Students | 37.4 | 75 | 74.8 | 150 | 49.8 | 70.2 |
| 1e. Science Performance Index - All Students | 42.5 | 75 | 56.6 | 100 | 56.6 | 85.0 |
| 1f. Science Performance Index - High Needs Students | 40.4 | 75 | 53.8 | 100 | 53.8 | 72.2 |
| 2a. ELA Academic Growth - All Students | . | 100% | . | . | . | 59.9 |
| 2b. ELA Academic Growth - High Needs Students | . | 100% | . | . | . | 55.1 |
| 2c. Math Academic Growth - All Students | . | 100% | . | . | . | 62.5 |
| 2d. Math Academic Growth - High Needs Students | . | 100% | . | . | . | 55.2 |
| 2e. Progress Toward English Proficiency - Literacy | . | 100% | . | . | . | 60.0 |
| 2f. Progress Toward English Proficiency - Oral | . | 100% | . | . | . | 52.1 |
| 4a. Chronic Absenteeism - All Students | 12.6% | <=5% | 34.9 | 50 | 69.7 | 78.3 |
| 4b. Chronic Absenteeism - High Needs Students | 16.2% | <=5% | 27.6 | 50 | 55.1 | 55.7 |
| 5. Preparation for CCR - Percent Taking Courses | 88.1% | 75% | 50.0 | 50 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 6. Preparation for CCR - Percent Passing Exams | 25.0% | 75% | 16.7 | 50 | 33.3 | 56.7 |
| 7. On-track to High School Graduation | 93.4% | 94% | 49.7 | 50 | 99.4 | 93.6 |
| 8. 4-year Graduation: All Students (2018 Cohort) | 91.9% | 94% | 97.8 | 100 | 97.8 | 93.9 |
| 9. 6-year Graduation: High Needs Students (2016 Cohort) | 92.6% | 94% | 98.5 | 100 | 98.5 | 88.6 |
| 10. Postsecondary Entrance (Graduating Class 2018) | 66.7% | 75% | 88.9 | 100 | 88.9 | 94.5 |
| 11. Physical Fitness (estimated participation rate = 83.9%) | 0.0% | 75% | 0.0 | 50 | 0.0 | 70.6 |
| 12. Arts Access | 66.3% | 60% | 50.0 | 50 | 100.0 | 86.5 |
| Accountability Index | . | | 944.8 | 1450 | 65.2 | 74.2 |

Gap Indicators

| Indicator | Non-High Needs Rate | High Needs Rate | Size of Gap | State Gap Mean +1 Standard Deviation | Is Gap an Outlier? |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| ELA Performance Index Gap | . | 41.1 | . | 15.3 | |
| Math Performance Index Gap | . | 37.4 | . | 17.4 | |
| Science Performance Index Gap | . | 40.4 | . | 16.3 | |
| Graduation Rate Gap (2016 Cohort) | . | 92.6 | . | 8.0 | |

If the Non-High Needs Rate exceeds the ultimate target (75 for Performance Index and 94% for Graduation Rate), the ultimate target is used for gap calculations.

If the size of the gap exceeds the state mean gap plus one standard deviation, the gap is an outlier.

Assessment Participation Rates

| Indicator | Participation Rate (%) |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| ELA - All Students | 100.0 |
| ELA - High Needs Students | 100.0 |
| Math - All Students | 100.0 |
| Math - High Needs Students | 100.0 |
| Science - All Students | 97.6 |
| Science - High Needs Students | 96.9 |

Minimum participation standard is 95%.

| 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 |
| Notes and Evidence: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator 2.1: CSDE site visit staff reviewed Common Ground High School's (Common Ground) last certified financial audit and uncovered no significant findings, conditions or internal control weakness. • Indicator 2.2: CSDE site visit staff reviewed Common Ground's last certified financial audit, Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual (APPM) and budgets, and interviewed the school principal, Director of Operations and governing board members. Staff from the CSDE's Office of Internal Audit determined the APPM contains the standard sections of an APPM. The reviewers determined Common Ground completed on-time submission of certified audits and annual budgets. • Indicator 2.3: Staff from the CSDE's Office of Internal Audit reviewed Common Ground's latest certified financial audits and determined Common Ground's debt to asset ratio (total liabilities/total assets), total margin (net income/revenue), current asset ratio (current assets / current liabilities) and days of unrestricted cash (unrestricted cash / ((total expenditures – depreciation) / 365 days)) meet or exceed the ranges recommended by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), signifying overall financial health. • Indicator 2.4: A review of Common Ground's school policies regarding anti-nepotism and conflict of interest were found to not be in compliance with the CSDE administrative oversight guidelines. The school is in the process of amending the anti-nepotism and conflict of interest policies. Common Ground's policies and procedures regarding 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 regulations. This finding is supported by a review of background checks, board training records, school website, and the Governing Board meeting minutes. • Indicator 2.5: As evidenced during the site visit, Common Ground has a safe and well-maintained school facility to support teaching and learning. The facility has been approved by the New Haven Fire Marshal and Building Department. The school has proof of property insurance. | |

| 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM |
| Notes and Evidence: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator 3.1: The latest CSDE audited student enrollment data from 2018-19 reported 216 students in Grades PK-4 with 72.7 percent residing in New Haven (the host district). A review of the school's student enrollment policy, and interviews with school staff, board members and parents determined all students are admitted through a blind lottery. • Indicator 3.2: A review of Common Ground's waitlist information (Table 3, page 11) determined it maintains a waitlist of families beyond the available number of seats. In 2019-2020, 286 students were on the waiting list. The waitlist has included more than 185 students each year for the past three years. • Indicator 3.3: A review of Common Ground's 2018-19 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports students of color represent 78.2 percent of Common Ground's student population and 62.5 percent of the students qualify for free and reduced-price meals. The school's special education population is 22.7 percent and the EL population is 5.6 percent. Overall, the student body reflects the demographics of the surrounding community. • Indicator 3.4: Common Ground demonstrates strong community support, as evidenced by parent interviews conducted by the CSDE renewal team. Parent focus groups described the communication between the school and families as strong. All expressed support for what they perceive is a strong curriculum and the school's dedication to ensuring each child's needs are met. Parents expressed favorable comments with the school's commitment to serving students with diverse needs. Students testified during the public hearing that they are satisfied with the educational choice opportunity the school provides. Over 130 individuals attended the October 10, 2019, renewal public hearing, and 30 individuals offered testimony supporting the school's efforts and the renewal of its charter. No one spoke against the renewal of the school's charter. • Indicator 3.5: School culture and climate policies reviewed by the CSDE site visit staff were clear and concise. Classroom observations revealed consistent implementation of behavior management model. A review of Common Ground's 2018-19 school culture and climate data reports a chronic absenteeism rate of 12.6 percent, 2.2 percentage points above the state's rate of 10.4 percent, and an average daily attendance rate of 94.3 percent, which is near the CSDE's goal of 95 percent. Common Ground's suspension rate of 6.8 percent is 0.1 of a percentage point above the state's 6.7 percent and 0.5 percent below New Haven's 7.3 percent. | |

| 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input 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: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 agendas are posted on the school website. Education records and testing data are secured in locked file cabinets in the school director's office. • Indicator 4.2: A review of Common Ground 2018-19 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports the percentage of special education students at the school as 22.7 percent. To address student needs, Common Ground employs two full-time special education teachers that provide instruction and individualized services to identified students. <p>Common Ground provides special education supports and services within the least restrictive environment continuum as determined by the identified student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Most services are provided in the classroom in the context of the general education instruction that is being provided. The special education teachers develop lesson plans and much of the instruction is carried out by instructional assistants that are supervised. Students with IEPs that require a support period have access to a resource room staffed by special education teachers, and instructional assistants. Related services including speech and language, psychology and social work are being provided by district staff. Common Ground requires all service providers to log all service hours electronically in real time. This log is reviewed monthly by Common Ground to ensure all required service hours outlined in student IEP's are provided and any compensatory services are scheduled and provided.</p> <p>Student education files are kept in locked file cabinets. All files reviewed had individual sign-in access sheets. The reviewed files were well organized and maintained. Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings are held by the School District where the student resides. Parents/Guardians, students, as appropriate, and Common Ground staff are invited to participate in the meeting. The PPT develops, reviews, and revises the IEP based upon the student's individualized needs. It was recommended to administration that teachers would benefit from technical assistance in effective participation in the PPT process, new seclusion and restraint legislation, as well as maintaining a seclusion and restraint log. The school is in the process of arranging training sessions that focus on these areas with the State Bureau of Special Education to be facilitated by the State Education Resource Center (SERC).</p> | |

- **Indicator 4.3:** A review of Common Ground's 2018-19 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports the percentage of students identified as English Learners (ELs) at the school is 5.6 percent. The school is not required to provide a bilingual program as it does not enroll 20 or more ELs with the same non-English native language. The school meets its obligation to provide supports to ELs through differentiated instruction provided by the classroom teacher and teacher support staff in the general education classroom. The school has developed an EL plan. The plan contains sections including: EL identification, serving EL students, parent communication and rights, annual assessment and exit criteria. The school has added the LAS Links, the annual English language proficiency test to the assessment calendar. The school was required to make some policy changes to its EL identification process, which it has done. Common Ground ensures that translation/interpretation continues to be available to families, as needed, as it is the parents' right to receive information in a language that they understand.
- **Indicator 4.4:** Common Ground 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 reviewed the state certified staff file and the school's employee roster. A review of Common Ground's staff file as of November 26, 2019, reports 100 percent of staff are in compliance with certification.

Common Ground in compliance with the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program.

Common Ground is in compliance with Educator Evaluation and Support Plan (EESP).

- **Indicator 4.6:** A review of legal actions brought against Common Ground determined that no government agency alleged the violation of any law by the school, or undertaken any investigation of any violation of law by the school.

| Prepared by: | Reviewed by: | Approved by: |
|---|--|--|
| Robert Kelly, Charter School Program Manager | Lisa Lamenzo, Turnaround Office, Bureau Chief | Desi D. Nesmith, Deputy Commissioner of Academics and Innovation |

COMMON GROUND HIGH SCHOOL DATA

Table 1: 2018-19 Student Enrollment and Demographic Information (latest audited student data)

| | |
|--|------|
| Grades served: | 9-12 |
| Total enrollment: | 216 |
| Percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price meals: | 62.5 |
| Percentage of special education students: | 22.7 |
| Percentage of students with limited English proficiency: | 5.6 |
| Percentage American Indian or Alaska Native: | |
| Percentage of Asian students: | * |
| Percentage of Black students: | 40.3 |
| Percentage of Hispanic students: | 34.3 |
| Percentage of Two or More Races: | * |
| Percentage of Caucasian students: | 21.8 |

*N<=5. Data suppressed to ensure student data privacy.

Table 2: School Culture and Climate Data

| Performance Metric: | School 2016-17: | School 2017-18: | School 2018-19: | State 2018-19: |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Average daily attendance rate: | 93.9% | 93.8% | 94.3% | 94.9% |
| Chronic absenteeism rate: | 12.9% | 15.5% | 12.6% | 10.4% |
| Number of in-school suspensions: | 7 | 6 | * | |
| Number of out-of-school suspensions: | 16 | 12 | 15 | |
| Suspension rate (% students with 1+ suspension): | 8.9% | 7.9% | 6.8% | 6.7% |
| Number of expulsions: | * | 0 | * | |
| Cohort graduation rate (if applicable): | 86.0% | 91.9% | N/A | N/A |
| Six Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (if applicable): | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

Table 3: Student Waitlist and Mobility Information

| Performance Metric: | 2017-18: | 2018-19: | 2019-20: |
|--|----------|----------|----------|
| Waitlist number: | 229 | 186 | 286 |
| Number of enrolled students who left during the school year, or who did not re-enroll the next school year and did not complete the highest grade at the school: | 37 | 42 | N/A |

COMMON GROUND HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST DATA

| Table 4: Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) - Percentage of students at level 3 and 4 (met/exceeded) | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| | School 2017-18 | School Average Score | School 2018-19 | School Average Score | District 2018-19 | District Average Score | State 2018-19 | State Average Score |
| ELA | 57.8% | 499 | 26.8% | 441 | 34.3% | 444 | 61.6 | 514 |
| MATH | 26.7% | 467 | * | 412 | 12.1% | 423 | 40.6 | 500 |

Common Ground Next Generation Science Standards Assessment Data

| Table 5: Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessment-Percentage of students at level 3 and 4 (met/exceeded) | | | |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| GRADE | School 2018-19 | District 2018-19 | State 2018-19 |
| All Grades Combined | 17.5 | 26.6 | 51.2 |
| 11 | 17.5 | 17.2 | 47.7 |

*The data are suppressed to ensure confidentiality.



**State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591



REPRESENTATIVE TONI E. WALKER
93rd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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CHAIRMAN
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

MEMBER
EMPLOYMENT
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

October 10, 2019

Chairperson Allan B. Taylor
Connecticut State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard - Suite 606
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Mr. Taylor:

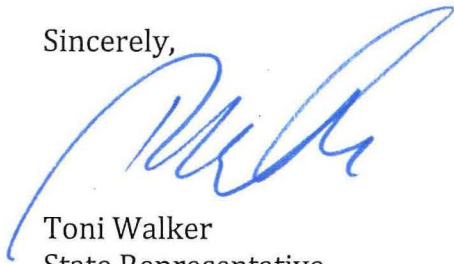
Since its inception in 1997, Common Ground charter school has provided quality education to students who share an interest in community building, leadership, and creating a sustainable environment for generations to come. With its strong focus on urban ecology, a diverse group of students travel to New Haven to receive an education unlike any offered in the traditional high school setting. With a 92% graduation rate and a 97% college acceptance rate, Common Ground has proven itself to be effective in cultivating and preparing students for life inside and outside of a classroom.

When my husband became a volunteer board member in 2001, I was introduced to Common Ground. Bearing witness to a school filled with character was exciting for both of us. Alongside a standard curriculum, students engage in an array of activities including ones that incorporate outdoor learning into their studies. Common Ground partners with 22 New Haven Public Schools to create and expand local school gardens. Through the school's urban farm, students participate in mobile farmers' markets bringing fresh food items to neighborhoods that do not always have these items readily available.

All New Haven residents benefit from Common Ground, as my grandchildren attend their summer camp program. The camp gives local youth the opportunity to play and be children while learning the importance of protecting our natural resources. I have a deeper appreciation for the school and its faculty when I hear stories of my grandchildren running through mud and caring for the plants they have worked so tenderly to grow.

It is because of these reasons I would like to express my full support of Common Ground's charter renewal application and ask the State Board of Education to consider all the amazing things this high school has done for its students and the New Haven community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Toni Walker', with a large, sweeping initial 'T'.

Toni Walker
State Representative