

**V.F.**

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford**

**TO BE PROPOSED:**

May 3, 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 Trailblazers Academy from July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2021, subject to the conditions noted in the Commissioner's May 3, 2017, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of \_\_\_\_\_, this third day of May, 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:** May 3, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Renewal of State Charter – Trailblazers Academy Charter School, Stamford

*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, 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**

Trailblazers Academy Charter School (TA) opened in the fall of 1999 and serves 129 students in Grades 6-8, primarily from the City of Stamford (the host district). Table 1 on page 13, of the attached Charter Renewal Report provides 2015-16 student enrollment and demographic data. 93.6 percent of TA's students qualify for free or reduced price meals and 32 percent of students receive special education services. TA's mission states, in part, "to successfully transition students to high school on track to go to college. While maintaining small classes and fostering positive relationships, the school works to build a strong academic foundation for each student by emphasizing core subjects, high academic standards, life skills and character development." From its inception the school seeks and attracts students who have failed in the traditional school setting. The profile for the average TA student involves encounters with the Department of Children and Families and clinical diagnosis involving cognitive or social maladies. Seven percent of students currently have open cases with the Department of Children and Families and 8.5 percent of students are currently on juvenile probation.

Historically, students enter TA significantly below grade level achievement in literacy and numeracy. On average, TA's students enter three grade levels behind in reading and math according to their STAR benchmark assessments. These significant deficits are reflected in low Smarter Balanced scores. The percentage of TA students in Grades 6-8 meeting or exceeding the achievement standard on the 2016 Smarter Balance Assessment remained in the single digits for each grade and content area with one exception, Grade 8 ELA (26.3). To help address student needs, the school utilizes small class size for increased individualized attention, and a wrap-around service model that emphasizes literacy skills remediation, family advocacy services and extended learning time opportunities. TA continues to focus on improving each student's rate of growth with a goal of one grade level growth per year. As a result, TA has instituted numerous programmatic changes to address these needs with a redesign of the curriculum in mathematics, English language arts, and social studies, the addition of a math and ELA coach to improve instructional practices, and implementing explicit strategy instruction.

TA was identified by the CSDE in March 2016 as a Category 5 Turnaround school. A Category 5 Turnaround school is a school that is among the lowest performing schools in Connecticut that was identified in 2014-15 and remains on the list in 2015-16. The school culture and climate data (Table 2) indicate the school has serious student attendance issues and student behavior issues. TA average daily attendance rate of 87.0 percent in 2015-16 is below the state goal of 95.0 percent. Although the 2015-16 chronic absenteeism rate of 18.6 is almost twice the state chronic absenteeism rate of 9.6 percent, this is a dramatic improvement of the 65.9 percent rate reported in 2014-15. Interventions such as family advocates and transportation assessments and accommodations are part of the strategies being utilized and should continue. It is noted that the 2015-16 suspension rate of 30.2 percent is over four times the state average of 7.0 percent. TA's school population is unique, in that it serves students who were not able to meet the behavioral expectations of the prior school placement and approximately 1/3 of students are new each year.

## **Charter Renewal Process**

*Application for Renewal of Charter:* The CSDE accepted an application for the renewal of TA'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. TA submitted data and evidence to substantiate the charter school's written responses.

A review team comprised of CSDE staff with expertise in curriculum, assessment, special education, English learners, school management, finance, and school governance reviewed the renewal application and requested clarification and additional information, where necessary.

*Renewal Site Visit:* On November 9, 2016, the CSDE review team conducted an on-site visit at TA. The purpose of the renewal on-site visit was to observe TA'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 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 TA from the Superintendent of Stamford and from contiguous school districts: Darien, Greenwich and New Canaan. The CSDE received no letters in favor of or against the renewal of the school's charter.

*Public Hearing:* Stephen Wright, member of the SBE, and CSDE staff held a public hearing on December 20, 2016, in the City of Stamford, and heard from 28 individuals on the potential charter renewal of TA and the impact it is having on the community. Public hearing participants included members of the TA community, including family members, students, school staff, board members, alumni and community members. Over 100 people attended the public hearing. Twenty-eight individuals offered testimony supporting the school's efforts and the renewal of its charter. No one spoke out against the renewal of the school's charter.

## **Site Visit Findings**

The most recent available data and information is contained in the Charter Renewal Report, Next Generation Accountability Report 2015-16, Tables 2 and 4 on page 13 and 14 display TA's performance and success according to the four performance standards. The report highlights school strengths and areas for continued growth.

### **Strengths include:**

- Certified audits and annual budgets were completed and submitted on time.
- No significant findings, conditions, or internal weaknesses were uncovered in TA's last three certified financial audits.

TA meets or exceeds the ranges recommended by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, signifying overall financial health.

### **Areas of concern include:**

- The percentage of TA students achieving at or above proficiency (level 3 and 4) on the Smarter Balanced English Language Arts (ELA) assessment (Table 4) is 11.3 percent in Grade 6-8. While this is 38.4 percentage points below Stamford (49.7 percent), it is 44.3 percentage points below the state average (55.6 percent).
- The percentage of TA students achieving at or above proficiency (level 3 and 4) on the Smarter Balanced Mathematics assessment (Table 4) is 4.2 percent in Grades 6-8. While this is 36.8 percentage points below Stamford (41.0 percent), it is 39.8 percentage points below the state average (44.0 percent).
- The percentage of TA students achieving at or above proficiency (level 3 and 4) on the Smarter Balanced ELA assessment (Table 4) is 2.0 percent in Grade 6. While this is 46.5 percentage points below Stamford (48.5 percent), it is 53.0 percentage points below the state average (55.0 percent).
- The percentage of TA students achieving at or above proficiency (level 3 and 4) on the Smarter Balanced ELA assessment (Table 4) is 8.1 percent in Grade 7. While this is 42.5 percentage points below Stamford (50.6 percent), it is 47.1 percentage points below the state average (55.2 percent).
- The percentage of TA students achieving at or above proficiency (level 3 and 4) on the Smarter Balanced in ELA assessment (Table 4) is 26.3 percent in Grade 8. While this is 22.8 percentage points below Stamford (49.1 percent), it is 29.2 percentage points below the state average (55.5 percent).
- The percentage of TA students achieving at or above proficiency (level 3 and 4) on the Smarter Balanced Mathematics assessment (Table 4) is 2.1 percent in Grade 6. While this is 34.1 percentage points below Stamford (36.2 percent), it is 38.5 percentage points below the state average (40.6 percent).
- The percentage of TA students achieving at or above proficiency (level 3 and 4) on the Smarter Balanced Mathematics assessment (Table 4) is 5.4 percent in Grade 7. While this is 37.1 percentage points below Stamford (43.1 percent), it is 36.4 percentage points below the state average (41.8 percent).
- The percentage of TA students achieving at or above proficiency (level 3 and 4) on the Smarter Balanced Mathematics assessment (Table 4) is 5.7 percent in Grade 8. While this is 32.9 percentage points below Stamford (38.6 percent), it is 34.6 percentage points below the state average (40.3 percent).
- Going forward, TA must increase its average daily attendance rate. TA's 2015-16 average daily attendance rate of 87.0 percent is below the state goal of 95.0 percent.
- Going forward, TA must reduce its chronic absenteeism rate. TA's 2015-16 chronic absenteeism rate of 18.6 percent exceeded the state average of 9.6 percent and Stamford's average of 11.7 percent.
- Going forward, TA must reduce its suspension rate. TA's 2015-16 suspension rate was 30.2 percent.

## **Charter Renewal Recommendation**

TA is a charter school that serves a specific need in the community by serving to re-engage students who are at high risk of dropping out and have struggled behaviorally and academically in a traditional school setting. TA must focus on providing increased services in the development of foundational skills as evidenced by the severe deficits in student achievement. The Turnaround Office will work with TA to develop a corrective plan focusing on student achievement:

- Implementation of a comprehensive assessment plan with continued usage of pre- and post-assessment of basic skills. The pre-assessment will indicate whether future diagnostic testing is required and the level of intervention that is necessary to improve student achievement. The post assessment will provide evidence of the rate of growth, determine student competency, and the achievement of growth targets.
- Adjustment of school schedule to provide additional targeted, intensive instruction in reading and mathematics for the neediest students. This time needs to be in addition to the core mathematics and English language arts instruction.
- Incorporation of skills-based scientific, research-based instruction and interventions on decoding, fluency, and numeracy in order to increase students' achievement levels in reading and mathematics. The Turnaround Office will provide technical assistance in the development of a more extensive menu of interventions in reading and mathematics.
- Decision making that is data driven involving student growth and performance relative to peers. The data will help inform long-range goals, instruction, and efficacy of interventions for each student.
- Utilization of high interest/low readability texts in multiple content areas that are matched to students' independent reading level/Lexile score to enable practice of reading more fluently, therefore increasing comprehension.
- Continued evaluation and revamping of curricular materials, instructional strategies and practices to ensure alignment to the Connecticut Core Standards and the inherent level of rigor. Specific efforts need to focus on differentiation in order to support student access to content.

Based on Trailblazers' performance indicators and acknowledging the students served and its mission, the CSDE recommends that the SBE renew the school's charter for a period of four years, with the following conditions:

1. By June 2, 2017, TA shall submit a plan for CSDE review and approval to minimize behavioral incidents resulting in suspensions and by adopting a restorative discipline model for the school including: (a) pre-teaching and re-teaching expected behaviors; (b) isolating the root causes of behavioral issues; (c) identifying interventions to target root causes; (d) strengthening school discipline policies and procedures; (e) monitoring interventions, and applying midcourse corrections, as necessary; (f) establishing suspension targets to ensure dramatic improvement; and (g) formulating detailed plans to engage school stakeholders, particularly parents, teachers and administrators, in developing a corrective action. Additionally, TA shall submit its year-to-date number of suspensions, and the concentration of students with one or more suspension to the CSDE twice annually, once in September via the annual reporting process and again at the midyear in January. The plan shall be developed in consultation with CSDE's Turnaround Office. TA shall implement the corrective actions within thirty days following the Commissioner's acceptance of the plan.
2. By June 2, 2017, TA 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. TA shall implement the corrective actions within thirty days following the Commissioner's acceptance of the plan.
3. By June 2, 2017, TA 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. TA shall implement the corrective actions within thirty days following the Commissioner's acceptance of the plan.

The CSDE will notify TA of action taken by the SBE following its meeting on May 3, 2017. 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 that TA is addressing 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**

<b>Charter School Information:</b>		
Charter School Name:	Trailblazers Academy Charter School	
School Director:	Miguel Pickering	
School Board Chairperson:	Steven Baker	
Location (City/Town):	Stamford	
<b>Rating Key:</b>		
<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 school falls below performance expectations with significant concerns noted, which require immediate attention and intervention.	
<b>Standard 1: School Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Points/Max</b>	<b>% Points Earned</b>
Accountability Index:	412.3/900	45.8
<b>Notes and Evidence:</b>		
<p>Schools that meet Standard 1: School Performance Indicators are schools earning an accountability index score that is in the state’s top three quartiles. Trailblazers Academy’s (TA’s) accountability score of 45.8 places its performance in the bottom quartile, which does not meet Standard 1. TA’s 2015-16 Next Generation Accountability Report is shown in detail on the next page.</p>		



# Next Generation Accountability Report: 2015-16

Choose a District

Trailblazers Academy District

No:	Indicator	Index Rate	Target	Points Earned	Max Points	% Points Earned	State Avg IndexRate		
1a.	ELA Performance Index – All Students	44.2	75	29.5	50	59.0%	67.7		
1b.	ELA Performance Index – High Needs Students	44.3	75	29.5	50	59.1%	56.7		
1c.	Math Performance Index – All Students	34.7	75	23.2	50	46.3%	61.4		
1d.	Math Performance Index – High Needs Students	34.6	75	23.1	50	46.2%	49.9		
1e.	Science Performance Index – All Students	39.1	75	26.1	50	52.2%	57.5		
1f.	Science Performance Index – High Needs Students	39.0	75	26.0	50	52.0%	47.0		
2a.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	41.9%	100	41.9	100	41.9%	63.8%		
2b.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	40.4%	100	40.4	100	40.4%	58.3%		
2c.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	35.6%	100	35.6	100	35.6%	65.0%		
2d.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	35.5%	100	35.5	100	35.5%	57.4%		
4a.	Chronic Absenteeism – All Students	18.6%	<=5%	22.8	50	45.6%	9.6%		
4b.	Chronic Absenteeism – High Needs Students	19.2%	<=5%	21.6	50	43.2%	15.6%		
5	Preparation for CCR – % taking courses	N/A	75%				67.6%		
6	Preparation for CCR – % passing exams	N/A	75%				40.7%		
7	On-track to High School Graduation	69.8%	94%	37.1	50	74.3%	85.1%		
8	4-year Graduation All Students (2015 Cohort)	N/A	94%				87.2%		
9	6-year Graduation - High Needs Students (2013 Cohort)	N/A	94%				78.6%		
10	Postsecondary Entrance (Class of 2015)	N/A	75%				71.9%		
11	Physical Fitness (estimated part rate) and (fitness rate)	94.6%	29.9%	75%	19.9	50	39.8%	89.2%	50.5%
12	Arts Access	N/A	60%				47.5%		
<b>Accountability Index</b>				<b>412.3</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>45.8%</b>			

These statistics represent the results from the second year of 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 consult the document titled Using Accountability Results to Guide Improvement which is available on the [Next Generation Accountability Resources page of the CSDE Performance Office](#).

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 originally outlined in Connecticut's flexibility application to the U.S. Department of Education and formally approved by the USED in August 2015 and is now included in Connecticut's state plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act.

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	44.3	N/A	16.5	
Math Performance Index Gap	N/A	34.6	N/A	18.9	
Science Performance Index Gap	N/A	39.0	N/A	17.2	
Graduation Rate Gap (2013 Cohort)	N/A	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	96.1%
ELA – High Needs Students	96.0%
Math – All Students	93.0%
Math – High Needs Students	92.9%
Science – All Students	87.8%
Science – High Needs Students	87.5%

Standard 2: Stewardship, Governance, and Management Indicators:	Rating
2.1. Fiscal Management	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input checked="" 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 TA’s last three certified financial audits, accounting policies and procedures manual (APPM) and budgets, interviewed the school business manager, school principals and governing board members. The reviewers determined TA 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 that language about financial policies and procedures, including processes for reviewing, approving, and reconciling bank and credit card statements; credit card issuance and use; purchasing procedures and thresholds; approved check signers and thresholds be strengthened. The CSDE has issued to TA a renewal report indicating issues to be addressed. TA is in the process of making the changes which will be completed and codified at its next governing board meeting. </li> <li> <b>Indicator 2.2:</b> CSDE site visit staff reviewed TA’s last three certified financial audits and uncovered no significant findings, conditions or internal control weakness. </li> <li> <b>Indicator 2.3:</b> Staff from CSDE’s Office of Internal Audit reviewed TA’s last three certified financial audits and determined TA’s debt to asset ratio (total liabilities/total assets), current asset ratio (current assets/current liabilities), total margin (net income/revenue) and cash flow (change in cash balance) meet or exceed the ranges recommended by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), signifying overall financial health. </li> <li> <b>Indicator 2.4:</b> TA’s policies and procedures regarding open board meetings and board membership training were reviewed and found to comply with state and federal laws, rules and regulations. This finding was supported by a review of board training records and the review of the school’s website and governing board meeting minutes. A review of board member background checks determined all have completed the process or have initiated the process. CSDE site visit staff reviewed school policies and bylaws and determined they require amending to comply with new CSDE administrative oversight guidelines (e.g., anti-nepotism and conflict of interest). The CSDE has issued to TA a renewal report indicating issues to be addressed. TA is in the process of making the changes which will be completed and codified at its next governing board meeting. </li> <li> <b>Indicator 2.5:</b> As evidenced by the site visit, TA has safe and well-maintained school facilities to support teaching and learning. Evidence included proof of property insurance, an approved Stamford Fire Marshal inspection, and approved certificate of occupancy issued by the Stamford 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 type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DNM
<b>Notes and Evidence:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Indicator 3.1:</b> TA currently serves 129 students primarily from Stamford, the host district, in Grades 6 through 8. 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.</li> <li>• <b>Indicator 3.2:</b> A review of TA’s waitlist information (Table 3 page 13) determined that it has not maintained a waitlist for the past two years. The October 2016 student enrollment (129) is 86 percent of the 2016-17 projected student enrollment and well below the state goal of 95.0 percent.</li> <li>• <b>Indicator 3.3:</b> A review of TA’s 2015-16 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports students from minority groups represent 95.2 percent of TA’s student population, and 93.6 percent of students qualify for free and reduced-price meals. The percentage of special education students at TA is 32.0 percent. Overall the student body reflects the demographics of the targeted population of high-risk students that the school seeks to serve.</li> <li>• <b>Indicator 3.4:</b> TA demonstrates strong community support as evidenced at the on-site visit by the CSDE during the parent interviews. All described the strong communication between the school and families as a key component. Parents and community advocates conveyed overwhelming support for what they perceive is a school that provides a quality alternative educational experience for their children. Over 100 individuals attended the December 20, 2016, renewal public hearing. 28 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.</li> <li>• <b>Indicator 3.5:</b> A review of TA’s student average daily attendance, chronic absenteeism and suspension rates (Table 2, page 13) are concerning. The average daily attendance rate of students has fallen from 97.4 percent in 2013-14 to 87.0 percent in 2015-16, and is well below the state goal of 95.0 percent. Student chronic absenteeism rate of 18.6 percent in 2015-16 is almost twice the state average of 9.6 percent. Its suspension rate of 30.2 percent is well above the 2015-16 state average of 7.0 percent and over two times the 2014-15 rate of 13.9 percent. TA must take measures to remedy student attendance and address behavior management 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
<b>Notes and Evidence:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Indicator 4.1:</b> 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 administration offices.</li> <li>• <b>Indicator 4.2:</b> A review of TA’s 2015-16 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports the percentage of special education students at the school was 32.0 percent. A review of student records, classroom observations and an interview with the school psychologist were conducted to determine how the school meets the needs of students with disabilities.</li> </ul> <p>PPT meetings are joint endeavors, including the TA special education coordinator (school psychologist), district of residence administrator, and other appropriate staff from the district of residence and TA. Discussions among TA staff, coordinator and parents regarding the development and revisions of IEPs are common. When teachers have concerns about a student who has not been identified as eligible for special education and related services, TA staff conduct observations, review student performance and discuss and implement strategies to address the concerns. If the strategies are found to be ineffective, TA staff submit a referral to the district of residence to conduct an evaluation. Once evaluations have been conducted by the district of residence, TA staff attend a PPT convened by the district of residence to review results of evaluations and to make recommendations. Based on these recommendations, TA will respond as required to meet the student’s needs.</p> <p>TA students with IEPs are integrated into the general classroom environment with occasional pull-outs for more specialized instruction. TA provides on-going differentiation and accommodations as needed by students to ensure their instruction is provided in the least restrictive environment with appropriate inclusion in the school’s academic program, and that they are provided appropriate accommodations during assessments. As evident in the review of student files, the school monitors student progress toward short-term IEP objectives and annual goals that are standard based.</p>	

- Indicator 4.3:** Classroom observations and staff interviews by the CSDE English Learner consultant during the site visit determined that English Learners (ELs) represent about 2 percent of TA’s current student population. It is evident that TA provides supplemental classroom support to ELs through a bilingual paraprofessional, native language communication with parents or guardians, and the assignment of a bilingual family advocate. A review of TA’s English Learner policies and procedures determined amendments were required to fully align to federal and state guidelines. The CSDE has issued to TA a renewal report indicating the issues requiring corrective action. TA is preparing its corrective action for CSDE review and approval. CSDE expects the process to be completed by May 2017.
- Indicator 4.4:** TA 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 (BESC) compared the state certified staff file to TA’s employee roster and found at the time of the on-site visit, 14 staff members were properly certified and three were not. The three staff members are in the process of applying for Charter School Educator Permits (CSEPs) with BESC to be in certification compliance. BESC staff will monitor the situation to ensure the certification process for these individuals is completed.
- Indicator 4.6:** A review of TA employment policies and procedures and interviews with school staff determined the school’s hiring and employment practices ensure protections under the Family Medical Leave Act, Americans with Disabilities Act and the 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 Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer

## TRAILBLAZERS ACADEMY DATA

<b>Table 1. 2015-16 Student Enrollment and Demographic Information</b>	
Grades served:	6-8
Total enrollment:	125
Percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price meals:	93.6%
Percentage of special education students:	32.0%
Percentage of students with limited English proficiency:	*
Percentage of minority students:	95.2%
Percentage of Asian students:	*
Percentage of Black students:	45.6%
Percentage of Hispanic students:	49.6%
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>	<b>STATE</b>
Average daily attendance rate:	97.4%	85.4%	87.0%	
Chronic absenteeism rate:	0.0	65.9%	18.6%	9.6%
Number of in-school suspensions:	9	0	*	
Number of out-of-school suspensions:	17	25	70	
Suspension rate (% students with 1+ suspension):	11.3%	13.9%	30.2%	7.0%
Number of expulsions:	0	0	0	
Cohort graduation rate (if applicable):	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Six Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (if applicable):	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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

<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:	6	0	0
Number of enrolled students who left during the school year:	8	10	N/A
Number of students who did not re-enroll the next year and had not completed the highest grade at the school:	23	9	N/A

**TRAILBLAZERS ACADEMY SMARTER BALANCED ASSESSMENT**

<b>Table 4: Smarter Balanced Assessment - Percentage of students at level 3 and 4 (met/exceeded)</b>								
<b>Subject</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>District-2015-16</b>	<b>State-2015-16</b>				
<b>ELA</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>55.6</b>				
<b>MATH</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>44.0</b>				
<b>Grades 6-8 Smarter Balanced Assessment - Percentage of students at level 3 and 4 (met/exceeded)</b>								
<b>GRADE</b>	<b>ELA 2014-15</b>	<b>ELA 2015-16</b>	<b>DISTRICT 2015-16</b>	<b>STATE 2015-16</b>	<b>MATH 2014-15</b>	<b>MATH 2015-16</b>	<b>DISTRICT 2015-16</b>	<b>STATE 2015-16</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>36.2</b>	<b>40.6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>50.6</b>	<b>55.2</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>43.1</b>	<b>41.8</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>26.3</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>55.5</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>38.6</b>	<b>40.3</b>

\*Data suppressed to ensure student data privacy.

**TRAILBLAZERS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL  
TABLES 5-8**

<b>Table 5: 2015-16 Reading Performance</b>							
<b>Star Reading assessment – Percentile Rank metric (PR)</b>							
	<b>Grade Tested</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Fall 2015 # Students at Proficiency</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Winter 2016 # Students at Proficiency</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Spring 2016 # Students at Proficiency</b>
	6	35	2	42	5	47	5
	7	32	6	33	5	30	5
	8	31	3	36	9	37	7

<b>Table 6: 2015-16 Math Performance</b>							
<b>Star Math assessment – Percentile Rank metric (PR)</b>							
	<b>Grade Tested</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Fall 2015 # Students at Proficiency</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Winter 2016 # Students at Proficiency</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Spring 2016 # Students at Proficiency</b>
	6	40	5	41	9	47	7
	7	23	4	31	6	19	4
	8	28	4	37	12	40	13

<b>Table 7: 2016-17 Reading Performance</b>							
<b>Star Reading assessment – Percentile Rank metric (PR)</b>							
	<b>Grade Tested</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Fall 2015 # Students at Proficiency</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Winter 2016 # Students at Proficiency</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Spring 2016 # Students at Proficiency</b>
	6	38	8	39	5	Not yet available	
	7	46	2	46	7		
	8	39	6	41	5		

<b>Table 8: 2016-17 Math Performance</b>							
<b>Star Math assessment – Percentile Rank metric (PR)</b>							
	<b>Grade Tested</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Fall 2015 # Students at Proficiency</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Winter 2016 # Students at Proficiency</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Spring 2016 # Students at Proficiency</b>
	6	37	10	38	12	Not yet available	
	7	45	7	43	9		
	8	39	10	38	10		