



**Public Charter
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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April 11, 2023

Dr. Gary L. Burgess, Sr.
Director
Charleston Advancement Academy
7000 Rivers Avenue, Building 100
North Charleston, SC 29406

RE: CAA Letter of Concern

Dr. Burgess:

On behalf of Charleston Advancement Academy (CAA), you have previously requested a list of noncompliance items that require correction. I communicated to you then that the noncompliance items related to revocation are set forth in the Notice of Revocation. Subsequently, the District sent to CAA a Letter of Concern regarding certain special education issues. The School has made progress toward those issues, which are being addressed via separate correspondence.

The purpose of this correspondence is to notify you of other areas of concern that have come to my attention in other aspects of the school's operations since you have become Director. This is not to say that any of these issues are your fault or have anything to do with your leadership, only that these are issues that have come to my attention recently. Per your request, I am directing these matters first to your attention for correction.

1. FOIA violations: The CAA Board has failed to properly identify topics to be discussed in executive session. For example, typical descriptions of matters to be discussed state "contractual arrangements" or "legal advice on matters covered by the attorney-client privilege." Further, CAA has not updated its online board

South Carolina Public Charter School District

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meeting minutes since February 10. It is not clear to me what role, if any, you have in developing board agendas, but I am directing this issue to you first as you requested. **Please ensure descriptions of items for executive session comply with FOIA and post board meeting minutes as approved.**

2. Title IX Information: The website lists former employees as individuals involved in the Title IX Complaint resolution process. **Please update Title IX information to comply with federal law.**
3. Fiscal Compliance: CAA bank statements are mailed to a Post Office box located on the Isle of Palms rather than the school campus and the CAA Board Chair has access to school bank accounts through mobile banking. Board meeting minutes reference a "capital account" in the amount of \$1.2 million that does not appear on CAA financial documentation provided to the District. **Please revise CAA banking and accounting practices to comply with GAAP, auditing standards, and the Accounting Manual.**
4. School Calendar: CAA continues to change its school calendar without authority or approval from the District. This is a violation of CAA's charter and prevents the District from effectively fulfilling its monitoring, oversight, and support roles. **Please do not change the CAA school calendar without approval in the future.**
5. Student Attendance: CAA student records indicate students with excessive absences that still may be awarded credit and/or not reported truant. For example, the District became aware of a CAA student this week with 143 class absences through the first 135 days of school. This student has missed 32 classes in second semester classes that have met only about 50 days, at most. Another student that was brought to our attention has 54 absences in three of the four classes enrolled, while his attendance records indicate the student was only absent three times in the other class. These student attendance records indicate some teachers may not be recording attendances accurately and the School may be failing to address excessive absences and potential truancy as required by the Charter and state law. **Please verify all students with excessive absences have been properly screened for truancy intervention, academic intervention, special education services, and that all PowerSchool entries have been entered in accordance with the Funding Manual.**

Dr. Gary L. Burgess

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6. PowerSchool: Cantey has noted a number of errors that need to be corrected in the Data Validation Tool.

- Precode Errors
- Home Room
- Missing/Invalid Next School Indicator
- Missing/Invalid 30-Day Parent Notification
- Missing/Invalid English Proficiency Levels
- Missing/Invalid First Record of MLP Services Date
- Incorrect Instructional Setting for Special Education EFA Primary Code
- Instructional Setting/EFA Code Mismatch
- Missing/Invalid Ninth Grade Code
- Students missing Primary EFA
- Students with Misaligned EFA Codes

This list is not all inclusive of the errors in the Level Data Validation Tool. **Please review all tabs within Level Data and work to correct the errors. If you have any questions about how to resolve an error, you can submit a ticket to help@canteytech.com for assistance.**

I am aware that many of these issues existed prior to your tenure at CAA. I also know that many of the issues may not be within your power to correct without cooperation from the CAA Board. However, I did want to honor your request to bring noncompliance matters to your attention when they were not related to the revocation. I also regret that our communication is necessarily limited due to the pending litigation and the campaign to disparage the District being waged by CAA. However, I remain available to you by written correspondence if I can be of assistance to you in serving CAA students.

Kids First,



Chris G. Neeley, MPA

Superintendent, SC Public Charter School District