

August 1, 2025

Albert Lucas  
Director of Legislative Services  
Board of Alders Legislative Services  
City of New Haven  
165 Church Street  
New Haven, CT 06510

Request for Property Tax Exemption: Booker T. Washington Academy and St.  
Stanislaus Church

Dear Mr. Lucas:

The Booker T. Washington Academy (BTWA) leases space from St. Stanislaus Church to provide education for New Haven students in grades kindergarten through four. As a Connecticut non-profit corporation and public charter school, BTWA is dedicated to serving the community. St. Stanislaus, the property owner, is also a Connecticut non-profit religious organization. However, the City of New Haven Office of Property Assessors continues to impose taxes on St. Stanislaus because it leases property for purposes outside its intended use. This tax burden is subsequently passed on to BTWA, significantly affecting the school's financial stability and limiting the educational services it can offer to its students and families.

Both BTWA and St. Stanislaus believe we should be eligible for property tax exemption, given that both entities are non-profit organizations providing essential services. We respectfully request that the Tax Abatement Committee consider our appeal for exemption based on the premise that both the church and the school are fulfilling roles that are exempt under Connecticut law.

BTWA plays a vital role in the New Haven community by offering parents a high-quality school choice for their children. Recognized as a High Performing School of Distinction by the Connecticut State Department of Education following the 2024 school year, BTWA primarily serves students from under-resourced communities and consistently achieves academic results that meet or exceed state averages. However, the school once again has to pay an annual tax reimbursement expense of approximately \$181,000, which directly impacts its ability to meet the needs of its students. Additionally, like many institutions, BTWA is experiencing rising costs in areas such as maintenance, utilities, and salaries, while the per-student revenue from the state

remains stagnant. This financial strain jeopardizes BTWA's long-term viability as a public charter school unless it can reduce expenses unrelated to its educational mission, including the property tax reimbursement.

In light of these challenges, St. Stanislaus and BTWA request that the Tax Abatement Committee approve an amendment to the current property tax obligation, waiving it in its entirety, or minimally reducing it to \$90,611.33, which reflects the amount paid to date. This adjustment would alleviate some of the financial pressure on BTWA, allowing it to allocate more resources toward better serving its students.

We urge the Tax Abatement Committee to consider this request at its earliest convenience. BTWA and St. Stanislaus are available to answer any questions from the Board of Alders upon request. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,

*Suzanne M. McDermott*

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Suzanne McDermott  
Director of Operations  
Blessed Michael McGivney Parish

*John Taylor*

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John A. Taylor Jr.  
Executive Director  
Booker T. Washington Academy