



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner
Date: January 16, 2014
Subject: Charter Renewals – Notification of Intended Actions for Boston Preparatory Charter Public School, Hampden Charter School of Science, Hill View Montessori Charter Public School, and Salem Academy Charter School

At its meeting in February 2013, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) voted to authorize the Commissioner to act on its behalf in “(a) granting charter renewals that do not involve probation; (b) approving charter amendments that do not involve changes in grade span, maximum enrollment, or districts served; and (c) removing or continuing conditions imposed on charters of charter schools; provided that the Commissioner shall report to the Board on all charter renewals, charter amendments, and conditions that have been so approved; and provided further, that the Commissioner shall notify the Board in advance of all such intended actions, and a Board member may request that the Commissioner place the charter matter(s) on the agenda of the Board for discussion and action.”

Applications for charter renewal are under consideration for Boston Preparatory Charter Public School, Hill View Montessori Charter Public School, and Salem Academy Charter School. Under the terms of the Board’s vote in February 2013, I am notifying the Board that I intend to approve these charter renewals.

Additionally, an application for charter renewal is under consideration for Hampden Charter School of Science. Under the terms of the Board’s vote in February 2013, I am notifying the Board that I intend to approve this charter renewal with conditions.

Please contact me by **Thursday, January 23, 2014**, if you wish to have any of the proposed charter renewals brought to the full Board for review and vote at the January meeting.

Below is summary information regarding each charter renewal. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) uses the [Charter School Performance Criteria](#) (Criteria) to report evidence regarding charter school performance in the three guiding areas of charter school accountability: academic program success, organizational viability, and faithfulness to the terms of a school’s charter. Over the past year, the Criteria were revised in collaboration with the field, presented to the Board’s Charter School Committee, and finalized in June 2013. Reviews of charter school performance, such as site visit reports and summaries of review, now include a color-coded system of feedback aligned to the Criteria to allow the Department to summarize

each charter school's performance more succinctly and clearly. This rating system is included in the full Summaries of Review for these five schools, which are attached to this memorandum. The third page of this memo captures the ratings for each of the renewal schools. Renewal decisions for these charter schools are being made in accordance with the process outlined in my memorandum dated October 7, 2013 regarding [Considerations for Charter School Renewal](#).

The superintendents of the districts sending students to these schools were invited to submit written comment regarding the charter renewals. No written comments were received.

Exceeds		The school fully and consistently meets the criterion and is a potential exemplar in this area.				
Meets		The school generally meets the criterion and/or minor concern(s) are noted.				
Partially Meets		The school meets some aspects of the criterion but not others and/or moderate concern(s) are noted.				
Falls Far Below		The school falls far below the criterion and/or significant concern(s) are noted.				
	Criteria	Boston Prep	Hampden	Hill View	Salem Academy	
Faithfulness to Charter	1. Mission and Key Design Elements	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Exceeds	
	2. Access and Equity	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	
	3. Compliance	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	
	4. Dissemination	● Exceeds	● Partially Meets	● Meets	● Exceeds	
Academic Program Success	5. Student Performance	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	
	6. Program Delivery	Curriculum	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Exceeds
		Instruction	● Partially Meets	● Partially Meets	● Meets	● Meets
		Assessment/ Program Evaluation	● Meets	● Partially Meets	● Partially Meets	● Exceeds
		Supports for Diverse Learners	● Partially Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets
7. Culture and Family Engagement	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets		
Organizational Viability	8. Capacity	● Meets	● Meets	● Partially Meets	● Meets	
	9. Governance	● Meets	● Falls Far Below	● Meets	● Meets	
	10. Finance	● Meets	● Meets	● Partially Meets	● Partially Meets	
Intended Action		Unconditional Renewal	Renewal with Conditions	Unconditional Renewal	Unconditional Renewal	

Boston Preparatory Charter Public School

Mission statement: “Boston Preparatory Charter Public School utilizes rigorous curriculum, extended academic time, and a range of supports for children and families to prepare 6th-12th grade students to succeed in college. An environment structured around scholarship and personal growth cultivates students' virtues of courage, compassion, integrity, perseverance, and respect.”

<i>Boston Preparatory Charter Public School (Boston Prep)</i>			
Type of Charter	Commonwealth	Location	Boston
Regional/Non-Regional	Non-Regional	Districts in Region	N/A
Year Opened	2004	Year(s) Renewed	2009
Maximum Enrollment	400	Current Enrollment	371
Students on Waitlist	443	Chartered Grade Span	6-12

Boston Prep is academically successful. As noted in the attached Summary of Review, Boston Prep is a Level 1 school. Boston Prep is faithful to the terms of its charter and is organizationally viable. The school has participated in exemplary dissemination efforts to share its best practices, implemented a Recruitment and Retention plan, and met a majority of the measures contained in its accountability plan. Given this evidence, and further demonstrated by evidence contained in the attached Summary of Review, I intend to renew the charter of Boston Prep.

Hill View Montessori Charter Public School

Mission statement: “The mission of Hill View Montessori Charter Public School is to provide a grade K-8, public education that promotes academic excellence using the Montessori philosophy. In partnership with teachers and parents, children attain high levels of academic, personal and social achievement and so prepared, become constructive contributors to our community.”

<i>Hill View Montessori Charter Public School (HVMCPS)</i>			
Type of Charter	Commonwealth	Location	Haverhill
Regional/Non-Regional	Non -Regional	Districts in Region	N/A
Year Opened	2004	Year(s) Renewed	2009
Maximum Enrollment	306	Current Enrollment	306
Students on Waitlist	469	Chartered Grade Span	K-8

HVMCPS is academically successful. As noted in the attached Summary of Review, HVMCPS is a Level 1 school. The school is faithful to the terms of its charter and is organizationally viable. The school has participated in dissemination efforts to share its best practices, implemented a Recruitment and Retention plan, and met a majority of the measures contained in its accountability plan. Given this evidence, and further demonstrated by evidence contained in the attached Summary of Review, I intend to renew the charter of HVMCPS.

Salem Academy Charter School

Mission statement: “Salem Academy is a commonwealth charter school serving the diverse population of Salem with a college preparatory program for students in grades six through twelve. Through a unique integration of college preparatory classes with service to the community, the school graduates informed, articulate and proactive individuals of strong character.”

<i>Salem Academy Charter School (SACS)</i>			
Type of Charter	Commonwealth	Location	Salem
Regional/Non-Regional	Non-Regional	Districts in Region	N/A
Year Opened	2004	Year(s) Renewed	2009
Maximum Enrollment	372	Current Enrollment	372
Students on Waitlist	350	Chartered Grade Span	6-12

SACS is academically successful. As noted in the attached Summary of Review, SACS is a Level 1 school. The school is faithful to the terms of its charter and is organizationally viable. The school has participated in exemplary dissemination efforts to share its best practices, implements an exceptionally rigorous and well-documented curriculum, and met a majority of the measures contained in its accountability plan. Given this evidence, and further demonstrated by evidence contained in the attached Summary of Review, I intend to renew the charter of SACS.

Hampden Charter School of Science

Mission statement: “The mission of the HCSS is to provide a college-preparatory-focused education to the youth of every race and ethnic group in Chicopee, Ludlow, Springfield, and West Springfield in a safe, academically challenging, and caring educational environment. Our promise is to sustain small school size, provide extended math and science curriculum, individualized attention, college guidance, university outreach programs, and to encourage student-teacher-parent partnership. Our mission will empower our students with the support necessary to reach their highest intellectual, emotional, social and physical potentials, building on the inherent promise to aid students’ preparation for college.”

<i>Hampden Charter School of Science (HCSS)</i>			
Type of Charter	Commonwealth	Location	Chicopee
Regional/Non-Regional	Regional	Districts in Region	Springfield, Ludlow, West Springfield, Chicopee
Year Opened	2009	Year(s) Renewed	N/A
Maximum Enrollment	350	Current Enrollment	254
Students on Waitlist	380	Chartered Grade Span	6-12

HCSS is an academically successful school. As noted in the attached Summary of Review, HCSS is a Level 1 school. HCSS is faithful to the terms of its charter, has begun to disseminate its best practices, implements a Recruitment and Retention plan, and met a majority of the measures contained in its accountability plan. Based upon evidence provided in the Summary of Review, however, the school's board of trustees has not yet established processes and practices to ensure the continued success and sustainability of the school. The board has not yet developed processes for evaluating itself or the school's executive director; does not participate in ongoing board training; has not yet engaged in strategic planning; and does not keep minutes of committee meetings, as required by the Open Meeting Law.

Given this evidence, I intend to impose conditions in the area of governance.

1. Beginning in February 2014 and until further notice, the Hampden Charter School of Science (HCSS) will submit to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department), at charterschools@doe.mass.edu or 75 Pleasant St., Malden, MA, 02148, board meeting agendas, materials, and minutes prior to each board and committee meeting at the same time these items are sent to HCSS board members and committee members. The Department reserves the right to request additional information, such as quarterly or monthly financial statements, if board materials do not already include this information, and HCSS must provide such additional information within two business days.
2. By April 30, 2014, all members of the Board of Trustees of HCSS will complete the Attorney General's Office Open Meeting Law series of six web trainings. All board members will sign a certificate stating that they have received, read, and viewed the following materials: the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25; regulations promulgated by the Attorney General under G.L. c. 30A, § 25; and educational materials promulgated by the Attorney General under G.L. c. 30A, § 19(b), explaining the Open Meeting Law and its application.
3. By June 31, 2014, the Board of Trustees of HCSS will develop or select tools to annually evaluate its own governance practices and to evaluate the performance of the school's executive director.
4. By September 30, 2014, the Board of Trustees of HCSS will have formally evaluated the performance of the school's executive director.
5. By October 31, 2014, the Board of Trustees of HCSS will engage in training, conducted by an external consultant, accepted by and approved in advance by the Department, on the roles and responsibilities of a charter school board of trustees.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Cliff Chuang, Associate Commissioner, at 781-338-3222; Jeff Wulfson, Deputy Commissioner, at 781-338-6500; or me.

Enclosures: Summaries of Review for Boston Preparatory Charter Public School, Hampden Charter School of Science, Hill View Montessori Charter Public School, and Salem Academy Charter School