

**Request of Salem Academy Charter School, Evidence Regarding Performance**

<b>Salem Academy Charter School [Tab B]</b>			
<b>Type of Charter</b>	Commonwealth	<b>Location</b>	Salem
<b>Regional or Non-Regional</b>	Non-Regional	<b>Districts in Region (if applicable)</b>	N/A
<b>Year Opened</b>	2004	<b>Year(s) Renewed</b>	2009, 2014
<b>Maximum Enrollment</b>	372	<b>Current Enrollment</b>	370
<b>Students on Waitlist</b>	254	<b>Grade Span</b>	6-12
<b>Amendment Request:</b> Increase enrollment from 372 to 480 (108)		<b>Current Age of School</b>	10 years
<b>Implementation:</b> 2015-2016		<b>Proven Provider Status Required.</b>	
<b>Mission Statement</b> 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.			

**Request:**

Salem Academy Charter School (SACS) seeks to increase its student enrollment by 108 seats over four years, initially increasing enrollment in grades 6-9 by 12 students and maintaining the 72 students in grades 6-9. SACS has previously received and successfully implemented an enrollment increase of 64 seats in 2011. A copy of the school’s request is attached.

The school reports that the increase in student enrollment will increase curricular and extra-curricular options for students and increase access to the program for all residents of Salem. The school maintains the size of the request will continue to support their commitment to know each student personally and support individualized learning. The school reports that the increase in enrollment will result in minimal increases in class sizes while also limiting the need for additional school staff. Increased enrollment will generate sufficient additional income to support the proposed expansion, provide salary increases for faculty and staff, and support the financial stability of the current program.

The school indicated, as part of its request and 2013-2014 annual report, its intent to lease additional space from their present landlord to accommodate the increased enrollment and to provide access to a new arts and athletics complex.

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### **Overview of School's Performance:**

Overall, the submitted amendment request, the school's 2014 renewal, and the Department's records indicate that the school's academic program is a success, that the school is a viable organization, and that it has been faithful to the terms of its charter. SACS has high student performance, achieving Level 1 status for the past three years; a school percentile of 56 in 2012, 63 in 2013, and 72 in 2014; a PPI of 100, 92, and 90 in the aggregate over the same three-year span. The PPI of the school's high needs subgroup was 100 in 2012, 87 in 2013, and 92 in 2014. The school's 4-year and 5-year graduation rates exceeded current state accountability targets for cohort graduation rates since its first graduating class in 2009.

The school reports increased interest from families in Salem since the district was identified as Level 4 in 2012; 44 percent of Salem's fifth graders applied in 2013 and 36 percent in 2014. The school implements a variety of recruitment strategies to encourage families to apply, including the use of mailings in English and Spanish to families of 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The school has also created a fulltime food services position to increase eligible participation in school nutrition programs.

At the time of its 2014 renewal, the Department noted that the school operates in a financially sound and publicly accountable manner overall, with a few concerns noted due to a budgetary shortfall in fiscal year 2011 (FY2011). As a result of the financial losses sustained in FY2011 related to a reduction in per pupil tuition, SACS was categorized as at moderate or potentially high risk on key financial indicators from FY2011-FY2014 in the Department's fiscal dashboard. The shift from quarterly to monthly tuition payments in FY2015 will also likely decrease the school's current use of a line of credit and short term loans to facilitate cash flow during the school year. SACS audits have been free of findings of deficiency and material weakness during FY2009 through FY2013. Two instances of noncompliance were noted in FY2010 and FY2013<sup>1</sup> and were subsequently corrected by the school.

The school has excelled at dissemination efforts, receiving a Commendation grant (Title 1 Commendation Schools Regional Dissemination Grant) to work with Salem Public Schools on standards-based approaches to middle school math instruction and a Dissemination grant (Charter School Program Grant) to continue collaboration on standards based curriculum and assessment with Salem Public Schools middle and high school leadership teams.

The Department solicited comment from the superintendent of Salem Public Schools. No comment was received. The Department received letters of support for the school from the Salem community including community organizations; administrators of local higher education institutions; and a current school committee member, the former school leader. The Department received additional letters of support from the school community, including the SACS' parent organization.

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<sup>1</sup> In FY2013, SACS did not submit the staff's withheld deductions to Massachusetts Teachers Retirement Board (MTRB) in a timely fashion. In FY2010, SACS did not have an individual licensed as a Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official (MCPPO).