



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: March 11, 2016
Subject: Charter Schools – Charters Renewed for Alma del Mar Charter School; Bridge Boston Charter School; Codman Academy Charter Public School; Phoenix Academy Charter Public High School, Chelsea; Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School; and UP Academy Charter School of Boston

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.”

On February 10, 2016, I notified the Board that I intended to renew, without conditions, the charters of four schools: Alma del Mar Charter School; Bridge Boston Charter School; Phoenix Academy Charter Public High School, Chelsea; and UP Academy Charter School of Boston. Additionally, for Codman Academy Charter Public School, I intended to renew the school’s charter with conditions; and for Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School, I intended to extend the school’s academic condition. Because no Board member requested that any of these matters be brought to the full Board for review, I am now notifying the Board that I have renewed the charters of these six schools.

Summary information regarding these six schools is provided in this memorandum. Each charter is renewed for the period of July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021. The charter of each school is renewed for the maximum enrollment, grades served, and district(s) served, as described below, and the schools shall operate in accordance with the provisions of G.L. c. 71, § 89; 603 CMR 1.00; and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such additional conditions as the Commissioner or the Board may establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.

Charter School Performance Criteria – Ratings and Recommendation Summary

● Exceeds	● Meets	● Partially Meets	● Falls Far Below
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		Alma	Bridge	Codman	Phoenix Chelsea	PVPA	UP Boston	
Faithfulness to Charter	Criteria							
	1. Mission and Key Design Elements	● Meets	● Exceeds	● Partially Meets	● Partially Meets	● Meets	● Meets	
	2. Access and Equity	● Meets	● Exceeds	● Meets	Recruitment: ● Meets Retention: ● Partially Meets	● Partially Meets	● Meets	
	3. Compliance	● Partially Meets	● Meets	● Partially Meets	● Partially Meets	● Partially Meets	● Partially Meets	
	4. Dissemination	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	
Academic Program Success	5. Student Performance¹		● Partially Meets ²	● Meets ²	● Partially Meets	● Partially Meets	● Meets ³	● Meets
	6. Program Delivery	Curriculum	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets
		Instruction	● Meets	● Meets	US/LS: ● Partially Meets MS: ● Falls Far Below	● Partially Meets	● Partially Meets	● Meets
		Assessment and Program Evaluation	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Partially Meets	● Meets
		Supports for Diverse Learners	● Meets	● Meets	US: ● Meets LS/ MS: ● Partially Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets
	7. Culture and Family Engagement	Social, Emotional and Health Needs	● Meets	● Exceeds	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets
		Family Engagement	● Exceeds	● Exceeds	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets
Organizational Viability	8. Capacity	School Leadership	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Partially Meets	● Meets	● Meets
		Professional Climate	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets
		Contractual Relationships <i>(if applicable)</i>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	● Meets
	9. Governance	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Partially Meets
	10. Finance	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets	● Meets
Commissioner Action		Unconditional Renewal	Unconditional Renewal	Renewal with Conditions	Unconditional Renewal	Renewal with Conditions	Unconditional Renewal	

¹ As noted in the October 2013 memo, [Considerations for Charter School Renewal](#), student academic achievement is of paramount importance during renewal.

² These schools do not yet have sufficient data to merit a Level determination. This rating is based on one and three years of assessment data for Bridge and Alma, respectively.

³ PVPA has met student performance expectations in the aggregate. As noted in this memorandum, however, the school partially met the condition to demonstrate continuous academic improvement in mathematics.

Alma del Mar Charter School

Alma del Mar Charter School			
Type of Charter (Commonwealth or Horace Mann)	Commonwealth	Location	New Bedford, MA
Regional or Non-Regional	Non-Regional	Districts in Region (if applicable)	NA
Year Opened	2011	Year(s) Renewed (if applicable)	NA
Maximum Enrollment	360	Current Enrollment	284
Chartered Grade Span	K-8	Current Grade Span	K-6
Students on Waitlist	819	Current Age of School	5
<p>Mission Statement Alma del Mar is an inclusive, K-8 Expeditionary Learning school that puts New Bedford students on a college trajectory and challenges them to be service-oriented leaders. By engaging in a rigorous academic program with an emphasis on meaningful work, our students will master essential skills and content, take ownership of their learning and think boldly while addressing complex academic and community issues.</p>			

Bridge Boston Charter School

Bridge Boston Charter School			
Type of Charter (Commonwealth or Horace Mann)	Commonwealth	Location	Boston
Regional or Non-Regional	Non-Regional	Districts in Region (if applicable)	NA
Year Opened	2011	Year(s) Renewed (if applicable)	NA
Maximum Enrollment	335	Current Enrollment	222
Chartered Grade Span	PK-8	Current Grade Span	PK-4
Students on Waitlist	1,800	Current Age of School	5
<p>Mission Statement Bridge Boston Charter School students thrive in a challenging, joyful, inclusive K1-8 public school community that values close partnerships with families and a focus on the whole child. Our students will develop the skills necessary to excel academically in rigorous high schools, reach their individual potentials, and view themselves as creators of their own futures. Through full-service programming, Bridge Boston Charter School works to remove the health and social obstacles that hinder student learning.</p>			

Codman Academy Charter Public School

Codman Academy Charter Public School			
Type of Charter (Commonwealth or Horace Mann)	Commonwealth	Location	Boston
Regional or Non-Regional	Non-Regional	Districts in Region (if applicable)	NA
Year Opened	2001	Year(s) Renewed (if applicable)	2006, 2011
Maximum Enrollment	345	Current Enrollment	322
Chartered Grade Span	PK-12	Current Grade Span	PK, K, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12
Students on Waitlist	880	Current Age of School	15
Mission Statement Our mission is to provide an outstanding, transformative education to prepare students for success in college, further education and beyond.			

The renewal of the charter of Codman Academy Charter Public School (Codman) is explicitly conditioned as follows. Failure to meet these conditions may result in the Board placing Codman on probation, revoking its charter, or imposing additional conditions on its charter.

1. By June 30, 2016, Codman must submit to the Department a comprehensive evaluation of the school's mathematics, English language arts, and science programs including, but not limited to, whether and how such programs effectively create an environment conducive to learning and foster student engagement. Such comprehensive evaluation must be conducted by an external consultant(s) acceptable to and approved in advance by the Department.
2. By July 31, 2016, Codman must submit an action plan to improve academic performance to the Department for approval. Such action plan must specify the strategies to improve mathematics, English language arts, and science performance for all student groups. The action plan must set clear and specific implementation benchmarks, with a clear timetable and deadlines for completion of key tasks, to allow the school's board of trustees and the Department to monitor implementation.
3. Codman must demonstrate that it is an academic success by December 31, 2017 by demonstrating significant and sustained academic improvement in mathematics, English language arts, and science.

Phoenix Academy Charter Public High School, Chelsea

Phoenix Academy Charter Public High School, Chelsea			
Type of Charter (Commonwealth or Horace Mann)	Commonwealth	Location	Chelsea
Regional or Non-Regional	Regional	Districts in Region (if applicable)	Chelsea, Everett, Revere, Lynn
Year Opened	2006	Year(s) Renewed (if applicable)	2011
Maximum Enrollment	225	Current Enrollment	196 ¹
Chartered Grade Span	9-12	Current Grade Span	9-12
Students on Waitlist	0	Current Age of School	10
Mission Statement			
<p>Phoenix Charter Academy's mission is to close the achievement gap that exists between academically underperforming adolescents who are in Chelsea and surrounding cities' district schools and their academically successful peers. Partnering rigorous academic work with relentless support for 15-21 year-old students, the Phoenix Charter Academy provides students with the tools necessary to achieve high school graduation and college success.</p>			

¹ The school's enrollment has increased since its October 1, 2015 SIMS data submission. On October 1, 2015, Phoenix Chelsea enrolled 155 students. As of January 26, 2016, the school reports an enrollment of 196 students.

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School

Pioneer Performing Arts Charter School			
Type of Charter (Commonwealth or Horace Mann)	Commonwealth	Location	South Hadley, MA
Regional or Non-Regional	Regional	Districts in Region:	
		Agawam, Amherst, Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Brimfield, Chesterfield-Goshen, Chicopee, Conway, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Gateway Regional, Gill-Montague, Granby, Granville, Greenfield, Hadley, Hampden-Wilbraham, Hampshire Regional, Hatfield, Holland, Holyoke, Leverett, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Monson, Mohawk Regional, New Salem Wendell, Northampton, Palmer, Pelham, Pioneer Valley Regional, Ralph Mahar Regional, Shutesbury, South Hadley, Southampton, Southwick Tolland, Springfield, Sunderland, Wales, Ware, West Springfield, Westfield, Westhampton, Whately, and Williamsburg.	
Year Opened	1996	Year(s) Renewed (if applicable)	2001, 2006, 2011
Maximum Enrollment	400	Current Enrollment	403
Chartered Grade Span	7-12	Current Grade Span	7-12
Students on Waitlist	327	Current Age of School	20
Mission Statement PVPA offers its students intensive exposure to the performing arts within the context of an excellent college preparatory curriculum.			

The February 10, 2016 memorandum to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School (PVPA) contained an inadvertent error. The memorandum contained inaccurate information regarding alignment of the school's assessments to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. I apologize for that error. In light of the factual correction provided by Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School's head of school, I have amended the conditions imposed on the school to focus solely on academic outcomes.

The renewal of the charter of PVPA is explicitly conditioned as follows. Failure to meet these conditions may result in the Board placing PVPA on probation, revoking its charter, or imposing additional conditions on its charter.

1. Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School must demonstrate that it is an academic success by December 31, 2017 by demonstrating significant and sustained academic improvement in mathematics.

UP Academy Charter School of Boston

UP Academy Charter School of Boston			
Type of Charter (Commonwealth or Horace Mann)	Horace Mann	Location	Boston
Regional or Non-Regional	Non-Regional	Districts in Region (if applicable)	NA
Year Opened	2011	Year(s) Renewed (if applicable)	NA
Maximum Enrollment	540	Current Enrollment	466
Chartered Grade Span	6-8	Current Grade Span	6-8
Students on Waitlist	130	Current Age of School	5
Mission Statement			
UP Academy will ensure that its students acquire the knowledge, skills, and strength of character necessary to succeed on the path to college and to achieve their full potential.			

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.