 ***Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.*Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:**  | Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner |
| **Date:**  | February 16, 2017 |
| **Subject:** | Renewal of Charters – Notification of Intended Actions for Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter Public School; Christa McAuliffe Charter School; Community Day Charter Public School – Gateway; Community Day Charter Public School – R. Kingman Webster; Pioneer Charter School of Science; Sizer School: A North Central Charter Essential School  |

At its meeting in February 2013, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) authorized 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 to renew charters are under consideration for the six schools addressed in this memorandum. Under the authority delegated to me in February 2013, I intend to renew the charters of the following schools: Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter Public School (APR); Christa McAuliffe Charter School (CMCS); Community Day Charter Public School – Gateway (Gateway); Community Day Charter Public School – R. Kingman Webster (Webster); and Pioneer Charter School of Science (PCSS). I also intend to renew the charter of Sizer School: A North Central Charter Essential School (Sizer) with conditions.

The superintendents of the districts sending students to these schools were invited to submit written comment (see: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=22834>) regarding the charter renewals. No comment was received for these schools.

Please let me know by **Wednesday, February 22, 2017**, if you wish to have any of these proposed actions brought to the full Board for review and vote at the February meeting.

**Charter School Performance Criteria and Considerations for Renewing Charters**

Below is summary information regarding each charter renewal. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) uses the [Charter School Performance Criteria](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/acct.html?section=criteria) (Criteria) to report evidence in the three areas of charter school accountability: faithfulness to the terms of a school’s charter, academic program success, and organizational viability. Renewal decisions for these charter schools are made in accordance with the process outlined in my memorandum dated October 7, 2013, regarding [Considerations for Charter School Renewal.](http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=7802) Reviews of charter school performance, such as site visit reports and summaries of review, 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.

The Criteria and the Considerations for Charter School Renewal outline performance expectations for charter schools but do not dictate accountability decisions formulaically, including renewal decisions. A charter school must demonstrate affirmative evidence of success in all three areas of charter school accountability, and decisions are made based upon the totality of evidence as presented in the Summaries of Review. Student academic achievement and improvement in student achievement for all student groups are of paramount importance. Failure to meet performance criteria will not necessarily result in a non-renewal; the Criteria set a high standard for performance. Performance relative to the Criteria is considered within the context of the school's performance trends and stage of development. The Commissioner and the Board have discretion to consider all qualitative and quantitative factors when making these decisions.

Over the past years, the Department has made a concerted effort to make the standards and processes of renewal more transparent and efficient. This work centered on revision of the Criteria in 2013 and articulation of standards and outcomes in the Considerations for Charter School Renewal. Additionally, starting with the renewal cycle for 2016-17, all Summaries of Review focus on a sub-set of the full Criteria. Summaries of Review will provide ratings,[[1]](#footnote-1) findings, and evidence for the six key criteria that address the indicators and evidence contemplated by the charter school statute. For additional information please see the memorandum, Update to the Renewal Process, dated December 23, 2016, and found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=24089>.

The chart on page 5 of this memorandum provides a dashboard for the six criteria at each of the six schools for which I intend to renew charters. Beginning on page 6 of the memorandum, I provide a brief summary of the evidence on which I base my decision. Attached to the memorandum is the Summary of Review for each of the six schools. Below, I provide further information regarding Criteria that may be of particular interest and provide context for the ratings.

**Criterion 2: Access and Equity**

All charter schools are required to ensure program access and equity for all students eligible to attend the school. New statutory provisions related to Criterion 2 were established in 2010.

The Summaries of Review contain multiple data sources for Criterion 2. Narrative text in the body of the Summaries of Review provides information on each school’s comparative demographic data regarding students at each school and students in similar grades in schools from which the charter school enrolls students; comparative attrition data; the status of each school’s recruitment and retention plan; and, if relevant, any enhancements made to each school’s strategies to recruit and retain certain populations of students more effectively.

Appendix B in each Summary of Review provides enrollment data for subgroups at the charter school and compares the data to that of other public schools in the municipality or region from which the charter school draws students. The information presented is derived from the Department’s School and District Profiles and the Charter Analysis and Review Tool (“CHART”). Appendix B to the Summaries of Review is intended to provide context for a charter school’s recruitment and retention effort, is presented for reference only, and primarily examines trends within the charter school itself.

The subgroup composition of a charter school is not required to be a mirror image of the schools in its sending districts and region. The Department urges caution in drawing any conclusions regarding comparability of subgroup populations between schools and districts based upon aggregate statistics alone. Enrollment of students in traditional public schools differs significantly from enrollment of students in charter schools. In particular, charter schools are required by law to use a lottery process when admitting students; traditional public schools must accept all students who live within the municipality or region that they serve. It is important to note that student demographics for a charter school, particularly in the aggregate, will not reflect recruitment and retention efforts immediately; charter schools must give preference in enrollment to siblings of currently attending students and are permitted to limit the grades in which students may enter the school.

The charter school statute requires charter schools to develop and implement recruitment and retention plans. Charter schools must receive Department approval for their recruitment and retention plans and must report on and update these plans annually. When deciding on charter renewal, the Commissioner and the Board consider the extent to which the school has followed its recruitment and retention plan by using deliberate, specific strategies to recruit and retain students from targeted subgroups; whether the school has enhanced its plan as necessary; and the annual attrition rate of students. One of the Department’s priorities with respect to charter schools is to utilize enhanced tools, such as “CHART,” and oversight processes to assess how effectively charter schools are providing access and equity for all students.

**Criterion 4: Dissemination**

One of the qualitative factors required as a condition of renewal is dissemination. The charter school statute requires charter schools to provide “models for replication and best practices . . . to other public schools in the district where the charter school is located.” G.L. c. 71, § 89(dd) (“a commonwealth charter shall not be renewed unless the board of trustees of the charter school has documented in a manner approved by the board that said commonwealth charter school has provided models for replication and best practices to the commissioner and to other public schools in the district where the charter school is located”).

Because dissemination requires two willing partners, the Department also considers efforts made by the charter school to disseminate innovative models for replication and best practices to other schools, districts, and organizations beyond the district where the charter school is located. There are multiple forums and activities through which a charter school may disseminate effective practices. These include, but are not limited to:

* partnerships with other schools implementing key successful aspects of the charter school’s program,
* active participation in district turnaround efforts,
* sharing resources or programs developed at the charter school,
* hosting other educators at the charter school, and
* presenting at professional conferences about its innovative school practices.

**Criterion 5: Student Performance**

Charter schools, like all public schools, must administer state assessments to students. Charter schools participate in the statewide accountability system and each year they receive Progress and Performance Index (PPI) scores, a school percentile, and an Accountability Level. The Charter School Performance Criteria note that charter schools must meet state student performance standards for academic growth, proficiency, and college and career readiness. Data presented in Summaries of Review include school results on state MCAS or PARCC assessments and data collected through the Student Information Management System (SIMS), including graduation rate and drop-out rate data, for all tested subjects at all grade levels and for all accountability subgroups. In 2015 and 2016, charter schools, like other public schools that administered PARCC in 2015 and 2016, maintained a previous Accountability Level. As an extension of being “held harmless,” charter schools were assured that they would not face non-renewal of their charters due solely to poor PARCC performance in 2015 or 2016. PARCC scores, however, can be considered for renewal decisions as a part of a school’s overall record of performance.

Beginning this year, Criterion 5: Student Performance, will not receive a rating. The Department will report the charter school’s Accountability and Assistance Level and its percentile as evidence for Criterion 5. Once the statewide accountability system is established pursuant to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Department will revisit this issue.

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| ** Exceeds** | ** Meets** | ** Partially Meets** | ** Falls Far Below** |

**Charter School Performance Criteria – Ratings and Recommendation Summary**

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|  | **Criteria** | **APR** | **CMCS** | **Gateway** | **Webster** | **PCSS** | **Sizer** |
| **Faithfulness to Charter** | 1. Mission and Key Design  Elements | ** Meets** | ** Exceeds** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** |
| 2. Access and Equity | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Partially Meets** |
| 3. Compliance | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Partially Meets** |
| 4. Dissemination | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Exceeds** | ** Exceeds** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** |
| **Academic Program Success** | **5. Student Performance[[2]](#footnote-2)** | **Level: 2****Percentile: 57th** | **Level: 2****Percentile: 64th** | **Level: Insufficient Data****Percentile: Insufficient Data** | **Level: Insufficient Data****Percentile: Insufficient Data** | **Level: 1****Percentile: 93rd** | **Level: 1****Percentile: 40th**  |
| **Organizational Viability** | 9. Governance | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Partially Meets** | ** Partially Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** |
|  | **Intended Commissioner Action** | Unconditional Renewal | Unconditional Renewal  | Unconditional Renewal | Unconditional Renewal | Unconditional Renewal | Renewal with Conditions |

**Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter Public School**

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| **Type of Charter**(Commonwealth or Horace Mann) | Commonwealth  | **Location** | Boston |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** (if applicable) | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 1997 | **Year(s) Renewed**(if applicable) | 2002, 2007, 2012 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 545 | **Current Enrollment** | 527 |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 5-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 5-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 542[[3]](#footnote-3) | **Current Age of School** | 20 years |
| **Mission Statement**To empower urban students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds to achieve their full intellectual and social potential by combining the best of the East – high standards, discipline and character education – with the best of the West – a commitment to individualism, creativity and diversity. |

As shown in the attached Summary of Review, APR has not consistently met state student performance standards for academic growth and proficiency over the charter term. The school is currently in Level 2 and in the 57th percentile. The school has been in Level 2 since 2013; in 2012 the school was in Level 1.

In 2016, the school administered the PARCC assessment for grades 5 through 8 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. The school also administered the MCAS assessment in 5th and 8th grade science and technology/engineering and in 10th grade for all subjects. In 2016, the school has a Progress and Performance Index (PPI) of 59 for all students and 55 for the high needs subgroup. Both PPIs did not meet gap narrowing targets. In 2016, the school did not meet its gap narrowing targets for most subgroups.

PARCC scores are designated by Levels, with Levels 4 and 5 meeting or exceeding expectations, respectively. In 2016, 49 percent of students received a Level 4 or 5 in ELA, and 39 percent of students received a Level 4 or 5 in mathematics. MCAS scores are designated by levels of proficiency, with proficient and advanced levels meeting or exceeding performance standards, respectively. On the MCAS, 100 percent of 10th grade students received a Proficient or Advanced in ELA, 86 percent of 10th grade students received a Proficient or Advanced in mathematics, and 80 percent of 10th grade students received a Proficient or Advanced in science and technology/engineering. Thirty-four percent of students overall received a Proficient or Advanced in science and technology/engineering.

In 2016, the school saw increases in its Composite Performance Index (CPI) for all students in ELA and mathematics and a decline in science and technology/engineering. The school’s CPIs for 2016 were 86.6 in ELA, 78.6 in mathematics, and 67.4 in science and technology/engineering. The school’s student growth percentiles (SGPs) were 59.0 in ELA and 44.0 in mathematics.

The school has exceeded state accountability targets of 80 percent and 85 percent for 4-year and 5-year graduation rates, respectively; the 4-year graduation rate for the 2015 cohort was 92.9 percent, and the 5-year graduation rate was 94.1 percent for the 2014 cohort. APR’s dropout rate has remained low. In 2015, APR’s dropout rate was 0 percent, meeting its annual target and its six-year goal.

The school is generally faithful to the terms of its charter, implements a Recruitment and Retention plan, has disseminated its best practices, is organizationally viable, and has met the majority of the measures contained in its accountability plan. Over the course of the charter term, the school has shown some declining trends in its CPI scores, particularly in science. As noted in the school’s Summary of Review, during the renewal inspection visit, visitors found that the school has implemented a new set of expectations for high quality instruction. Visitors observed consistent implementation of these expectations for instruction in over half of the classrooms, and partial implementation in the remaining classrooms. Like all public schools in Massachusetts, APR will administer the Next-Generation MCAS tests for the first time in the spring of 2017. The Department will closely monitor the school’s performance on the Next-Generation MCAS assessments for improvement.

Given this evidence, presented in more detail in the attached Summary of Review, I intend to renew the charter of Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter Public School.

**Christa McAuliffe Charter School**

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| **Type of Charter**(Commonwealth or Horace Mann) | Commonwealth | **Location** | Framingham |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional | **Districts in Region** (if applicable) | Ashland, Framingham, Holliston, Hopkinton, Marlborough, Natick, Southborough, Sudbury |
| **Year Opened** | 2002 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2007, 2012 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 396 | **Current Enrollment** | 395 |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 6-8 | **Current Grade Span** | 6-8 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 93 | **Current Age of School** | 15 years |
| **Mission Statement**The mission of the Christa McAuliffe Charter School is to cultivate within each member of a diverse student body, through the Expeditionary Learning design, an intense commitment to self and community, the courage and insight to set high standards for academic and personal success, and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to achieve those standards. |

As shown in the attached Summary of Review, CMCS has not consistently met state student performance standards for academic growth and proficiency over the charter term. The school is currently in Level 2 and in the 64th percentile. The school has been in Level 2 since 2013; in 2012 the school was in Level 1.

In 2016, CMCS administered the PARCC assessment for grades 6 through 8 in ELA and mathematics. The school also administered the MCAS assessment in 8th grade science and technology/engineering. In 2016, the school has a PPI of 69 for all students and 67 for the high needs subgroup. Both PPIs did not meet gap narrowing targets. In 2016, the school did not meet its gap narrowing targets for most subgroups, although the majority of groups improved below targets.

PARCC scores are designated by Levels, with Levels 4 and 5 meeting or exceeding expectations, respectively. In 2016, 75 percent of students received a Level 4 or 5 in ELA and 56 percent of students received a Level 4 or 5 in mathematics. MCAS scores are designated by levels of proficiency, with proficient and advanced levels meeting or exceeding performance standards, respectively. On the MCAS, 46 percent of students received a Proficient or Advanced in science and technology/engineering.

In 2016, the school saw increases in its CPI for all students in all subjects. The school’s CPIs for 2016 were 93.2 in ELA, 80.3 in mathematics, and 76.8 in science and technology/engineering. The school’s SGPs were 72.0 in ELA and 57.5 in mathematics.

The school is generally faithful to the terms of its charter, implements a Recruitment and Retention plan, has disseminated its best practices, is organizationally viable, and has met all of the measures contained in its accountability plan. The school has exceeded expectations for implementing its mission and key design elements.

Given this evidence, presented in more detail in the attached Summary of Review, I intend to renew the charter of Christa McAuliffe Charter School.

 **Community Day Charter Public School - Gateway**

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| **Type of Charter**(Commonwealth or Horace Mann) | Commonwealth | **Location** | Lawrence |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** (if applicable) | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 2012 | **Year(s) Renewed**(if applicable) | N/A |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 400 | **Current Enrollment** | 280 |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | PK-8 | **Current Grade Span** | PK-5 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 468 | **Current Age of School** | 5 years |
| **Mission Statement**The mission of CDCPS is to provide a kindergarten through grade eight school that will draw upon our considerable experience in working together as a community to develop and implement a curriculum that discovers and supports the special characteristics and unique learning styles of each student. We will engage that student in meaningful learning experiences for the purposes of clearly stated goals in the areas of understandings, knowledge, skills, habits, and social competencies. The school will reinforce the positive aspects of our city: its culture, art and economy, working class history, and strong work ethic. Our educational philosophy, curriculum, and teaching methods are informed by an understanding that learning takes place in the context of family and that family must be supported in ways that make learning for the child possible. |

As shown in the attached Summary of Review, due to its age, growth model, and grades served, Gateway does not yet have a Level or percentile for accountability purposes. Initial academic results from the school’s first two years of assessment data indicate strong initial academic performance in most areas.

In 2015 and 2016, Gateway administered the PARCC assessment for ELA and mathematics. In 2015, grade 3 students took the assessment; in 2016, grade 3 and 4 students took the assessment. PARCC scores are designated by Levels, with Levels 4 and 5 meeting or exceeding expectations, respectively. In 2015, 59 percent of grade 3 students received a Level 4 or 5 in ELA, and 82 percent of grade 3 students received a Level 4 or 5 in mathematics. In 2016, 65 percent of grade 3 and 4 students received a Level or 5 in ELA, and 71 percent received a Level 4 or 5 in mathematics. The CPIs for ELA in 2015 and 2016 were 85.3 and 86.0, respectively; and the CPIs for mathematics were 92.9 and 87.8, respectively. In 2016, the school’s transitional SGP for grade 4 students was 62.0 in ELA and 41.0 in mathematics. In 2016, the school met gap narrowing targets for all students and for subgroups in ELA but did not meet gap narrowing targets in mathematics for all subgroups.

The school is generally faithful to the terms of its charter, implements a Recruitment and Retention plan, is organizationally viable, and met a majority of the measures contained in its accountability plan. The school has met expectations for implementing its mission and key design elements. As part of the Community Day Charter Public School network, the school has been engaged in dissemination work that exceeds expectations. The school has a “partially meets” rating for Criterion 9: Governance due to the overlap in governance structures with its management organization, a private entity.

Given this evidence, presented in more detail in the attached Summary of Review, I intend to renew the charter of Community Day Charter Public School - Gateway.

**Community Day Charter Public School – R. Kingman Webster**

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| **Type of Charter**(Commonwealth or Horace Mann) | Commonwealth | **Location** | Lawrence |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** (if applicable) | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 2012 | **Year(s) Renewed**(if applicable) | N/A |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 400 | **Current Enrollment** | 280 |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | PK-8 | **Current Grade Span** | PK-5 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 476 | **Current Age of School** | 5 years |
| **Mission Statement**The mission of CDCPS is to provide a kindergarten through grade eight school that will draw upon our considerable experience in working together as a community to develop and implement a curriculum that discovers and supports the special characteristics and unique learning styles of each student. We will engage that student in meaningful learning experiences for the purposes of clearly stated goals in the areas of understandings, knowledge, skills, habits, and social competencies. The school will reinforce the positive aspects of our city: its culture, art and economy, working class history, and strong work ethic. Our educational philosophy, curriculum, and teaching methods are informed by an understanding that learning takes place in the context of family and that family must be supported in ways that make learning for the child possible. |

As shown in the attached Summary of Review, due to its age, growth model, and grades served, Community Day Charter Public School – R. Kingman Webster (Webster) does not yet have a Level or percentile for accountability purposes. Initial academic results from the school’s first two years of assessment data indicate strong initial academic performance in most areas.

In 2015 and 2016, Webster administered the PARCC assessment for ELA and mathematics. In 2015, grade 3 students took the assessment; in 2016, grade 3 and 4 students took the assessment. PARCC scores are designated by Levels, with Levels 4 and 5 meeting or exceeding expectations, respectively. In 2015, 61 percent of grade 3 students received a Level 4 or 5 in ELA, and 84 percent of grade 3 students received a Level 4 or 5 in mathematics. In 2016, 69 percent of grade 3 and 4 students received a Level or 5 in ELA, and 79 percent received a Level 4 or 5 in mathematics. The CPIs for ELA in 2015 and 2016 were 85.5 and 87.5, respectively; and the CPIs for mathematics were 92.8 and 91.3, respectively. In 2016, the school’s transitional SGP for grade 4 students was 57.0 in ELA and 41.0 in mathematics. The school met gap narrowing targets for all students and for all subgroups in ELA.

The school is generally faithful to the terms of its charter, implements a Recruitment and Retention plan, is organizationally viable, and met a majority of the measures contained in its accountability plan. The school has met expectations for implementing its mission and key design elements. As part of the Community Day Charter Public School network, the school has been engaged in dissemination work that exceeds expectations. The school has a “partially meets” rating for Criterion 9: Governance due to the overlap in governance structures with its management organization, a private entity; and has had instances of non-compliance with the Open Meeting Law.

Given this evidence, presented in more detail in the attached Summary of Review, I intend to renew the charter of Community Day Charter Public School – R. Kingman Webster.

**Pioneer Charter School of Science**

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| **Type of Charter**(Commonwealth or Horace Mann) | Commonwealth | **Location** | Everett |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional  | **Districts in Region** (if applicable) | Chelsea, Everett, Revere |
| **Year Opened** | 2007 | **Year(s) Renewed**(if applicable) | 2012 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 780 | **Current Enrollment** | 543 |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | K-12 | **Current Grade Span** | K-2, 7-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 733 | **Current Age of School** | 10 years |
| **Mission Statement**The mission of Pioneer Charter School of Science (PCSS) is to prepare educationally under-resourced students in Chelsea, Everett, and Revere for today’s competitive world. PCSS will help them develop the academic and social skills necessary to become successful professionals and exemplary members of their community. This goal will be achieved by providing the students with a rigorous academic curriculum with emphasis on math and science, balanced by a strong foundation in the humanities, a character education program, career-oriented college preparation, and strong student–teacher–parent collaboration. |

As shown in the attached Summary of Review, PCSS has consistently met state student performance standards for academic growth and proficiency over the charter term. The school is currently in Level 1 and in the 93rd percentile. The school has been in Level 1 since 2012.

In 2016, the school administered the PARCC assessment for grades 7 and 8 in ELA and mathematics. The school also administered the MCAS assessment in 8th grade science and technology/engineering and in 10th grade for all subjects. In 2016, the school had a PPI of 71 for all students and 67 for the high needs subgroup. Neither PPI met gap narrowing targets.

PARCC scores are designated by Levels, with Levels 4 and 5 meeting or exceeding expectations, respectively. In 2016, 60 percent of students received a Level 4 or 5 in ELA, and 61 percent of students received a Level 4 or 5 in mathematics. MCAS scores are designated by levels of proficiency, with proficient and advanced levels meeting or exceeding performance standards, respectively. On the MCAS, 98 percent of 10th grade students received a Proficient or Advanced in ELA, 93 percent of 10th grade students received a Proficient or Advanced in mathematics, and 88 percent of 10th grade students received a Proficient or Advanced in science and technology/engineering. Seventy-one percent of students overall received a Proficient or Advanced in science and technology/engineering.

In 2016, the school saw declines in its CPI for all students in ELA and no change in mathematics; the school was on target in science and technology/engineering. The school’s CPIs for 2016 were 91.0 in ELA, 86.7 in mathematics, and 87.2 in science and technology/engineering. The school’s SGPs were 48.0 in ELA and 69.0 in mathematics.

The school has exceeded state accountability targets of 80 percent and 85 percent for 4-year and 5-year graduation rates, respectively; the 4-year graduation rate for the 2015 cohort was 98.1 percent, and the 5-year graduation rate was 100 percent for the 2015 cohort. PCSS’s dropout rate has remained low. In 2015, PCSS’s dropout rate was 0.5 percent, slightly above its annual target and its six-year goal of 0 percent, but below the state average of 1.9 percent.

The school is faithful to the terms of its charter, implements a Recruitment and Retention plan, has disseminated its best practices, is organizationally viable, and has met all of the measures contained in its accountability plan. Additionally, because of the limited number of seats available under the current net school spending cap in Everett, I am imposing a cap on the number of students PCSS may enroll from Everett. PCSS’s maximum enrollment will remain at 780, but will be limited to a maximum of 400 students from Everett.

Given this evidence, presented in more detail in the attached Summary of Review, I intend to renew the charter of Pioneer Charter School of Science.

**Sizer School: A North Central Charter Essential School**

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| **Type of Charter**(Commonwealth or Horace Mann) | Commonwealth | **Location** | Fitchburg |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional | **Districts in Region** (if applicable) | Ashburnham-Westminster, Clinton, Fitchburg, Gardner, Leominster, Lunenburg, Nashoba, North Middlesex, Wachusett |
| **Year Opened** | 2002 | **Year(s) Renewed**(if applicable) | 2007, 2012 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 400 | **Current Enrollment** | 370 |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 7-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 7-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 69 | **Current Age of School** | 15 years |
| **Mission Statement**The Sizer School, a North Central Charter Essential School is a public school where students are known personally, challenged intellectually, and participate actively in their learning. Guided by its commitment to diversity and inclusiveness, the school seeks to send graduates into the world who THINK for themselves, CARE about others, and ACT creatively and responsibly. |

As shown in the attached Summary of Review, Sizer has not consistently met state student performance standards for academic growth and proficiency over the charter term. The school is currently in Level 1 and in the 40th percentile. The school was in Level 1 in 2012 and 2013 and in Level 2 in 2014 and 2015.

In 2016, the school administered the PARCC assessment for grades 7 and 8 in ELA and mathematics. The school also administered the MCAS assessment in 8th grade science and technology/engineering and in 10th grade for all subjects. In 2016, the school had a PPI of 76 for all students and 78 for the high needs subgroup. Both PPIs met gap narrowing targets. In 2016, the school met its gap narrowing targets in ELA for most subgroups. The school did not meet its gap narrowing targets in mathematics or science and technology/engineering for most subgroups, although the majority improved below targets.

PARCC scores are designated by Levels, with Levels 4 and 5 meeting or exceeding expectations, respectively. In 2016, 56 percent of students received a Level 4 or 5 in ELA, and 35 percent of students received a Level 4 or 5 in mathematics. MCAS scores are designated by levels of proficiency, with proficient and advanced levels meeting or exceeding performance standards, respectively. On the MCAS, 98 percent of 10th grade students received a Proficient or Advanced in ELA, 84 percent of 10th grade students received a Proficient or Advanced in mathematics, and 82 percent of 10th grade students received a Proficient or Advanced in science and technology/engineering. Thirty-eight percent of students overall received a Proficient or Advanced in science and technology/engineering.

In 2016, the school saw increases in its CPI for all students in all subjects. The school’s CPIs for 2016 were 92.7 in ELA, 75.8 in mathematics, and 70.0 in science and technology/engineering. The school’s SGPs were 52.0 in ELA and 58.0 in mathematics.

The school was below the state accountability target of 80 percent for 4-year graduation rates, and just met the state accountability target of 85 percent for 5-year graduation rates; the 4-year graduation rate for the 2015 cohort was 77.8 percent, and the 5-year graduation rate was 85.4 percent for the 2015 cohort. Sizer’s dropout rate has declined from prior years. In 2015, Sizer’s dropout rate was 1.4 percent, below its annual target of 3.2 and its six-year goal of 2.8 percent.

The school is generally faithful to the terms of its charter, implements a Recruitment and Retention plan, has disseminated its best practices, is organizationally viable, and has met a majority of the measures contained in its accountability plan. The school has met expectations for implementing its mission and key design elements. The school received a “partially meets” rating for Criterion 2: Access and Equity due to consistently high rates of attrition throughout the charter term. The school has a “partially meets” rating for Criterion 3: Compliance, because the school exceeded the state disciplinary removal rate for students with disabilities during the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years and for Hispanic/Latino students with disabilities in 2012-13 through 2014-15;[[4]](#footnote-4) the school is currently participating in the Department’s rethinking discipline professional learning network to reduce its use of suspension.

For the current and last school year, Sizer has enrolled more than 20 percent of its total enrollment from districts other than those in its charter region. The charter school statute explicitly states that

[i]n any instance where a charter school approved after January 1, 2011 enrolls more than 20 percent of its total enrollment from school districts not included in its original charter pursuant to subsection (h) for 2 consecutive years, the charter school shall submit an application to the board for an amendment to its charter that reflects its actual enrollment patterns; provided further that upon renewal of a charter school approved prior to January 1, 2011, the board shall establish a timeline of not less than 5 years for the charter to comply with this requirement.

G.L. c. 71, § 89(n).

Given this evidence, presented in more detail in the attached Summary of Review, I intend to renew the charter of Sizer School: A North Central Charter Essential School with the condition that follows.

Condition 1: As a result of enrolling more than 20 percent of its total enrollment from school districts not included in its original charter for 2 consecutive years, Sizer shall submit the following:

* By June 1, 2017, Sizer must send the Department an action plan regarding its enrollment pattern from school districts not included in its original charter.
	+ Should the school determine to maintain its current region, by August 2017, Sizer must submit for Department approval a plan that ensures that enrollment from districts outside of the school’s region does not exceed 20 percent of its total population by June 30, 2021, and corresponding charter amendment requests for the school’s maximum enrollment, enrollment policy, and any other relevant material terms.
	+ Should the school wish to add districts to its current region, the school must submit an amendment request by August 1, 2021.
* The recruitment and retention plans that the school submits on August 1 in 2017 through 2021 must address how the school intends to increase recruitment efforts within the region specified in the school’s charter.

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If you have any questions regarding my intended actions or require additional information, please contact Alison Bagg, Director (781-338-3218); Cliff Chuang, Senior Associate Commissioner (781-338-3222); or me.

Attachments: Memorandum: Charter School Renewal: Change in Process.

Summaries of Review:

Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter Public School

Christa McAuliffe Charter School

Community Day Charter Public School – Gateway and Community Day Charter Public School – R. Kingman Webster

Pioneer Charter School of Science

Sizer School: A North Central Charter Essential School

School Responses to Summaries of Review, if applicable

1. Instead of a rating, Criterion 5: Academic Performance provides the school’s Accountability Level and Percentile. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As noted in the October 2013 memo, [Considerations for Charter School Renewal](http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=7802), student academic achievement is of paramount importance during renewal. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. All waitlist numbers are taken from the Massachusetts Charter School Waitlist Updated Report for 2016-2017 published in December 2016, which is based on the October 1, 2017 SIMS report. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Sizer was identified under IDEA and cited for removal rate discrepancy for students with disabilities of over 10 days for the 2013-14 through 2014-15 school years and for removal rate discrepancy for Hispanic/Latino students with disabilities for 2012-13 through 2014-15. Of the 72 students with disabilities enrolled in Sizer in 2013-14, the school’s removal rate beyond 10 days for this subgroup was 5.6 percent (or 4 students), 5 times the state average. Of the 82 students with disabilities enrolled in Sizer in 2014-15, the school’s removal rate beyond 10 days for this subgroup was 9.8 percent (or 8 students), over 5 times the state average. Of the 57 Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in Sizer in 2014-15, the school’s removal rate beyond 10 days for this subgroup was 29.8 percent (or 17 students), over 7 times the state average. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)