*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

### 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906 Telephone: (781) 338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

| Jeffrey C. Riley  *Commissioner* |  |
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# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner |
| **Date:** | February 1, 2019 |
| **Subject:** | Charter Schools – Charters Renewed for Argosy Collegiate Charter School; Berkshire Arts and Technology Charter Public School; Hill View Montessori Charter Public School; Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School, Springfield; River Valley Charter School; and Salem Academy Charter 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.”

On January 10, 2019, I notified the Board that I intended to renew the charters of six schools. The charters of three of these schools, Berkshire Arts and Technology Charter Public School (BART), River Valley Charter School (RVCS), and Salem Academy Charter School (SACS), were to be renewed without conditions. The charters of the three others, Argosy Collegiate Charter School (ACCS), Hill View Montessori Charter Public School (HVMCPS), and Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School, Springfield (PAPCHSS) were to be renewed with conditions. 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 the six schools for which I renewed charters is provided in this memorandum. Each charter is renewed for the period of July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2024. The charter of each school is renewed for the maximum enrollment, grades served, and district(s) served, as indicated in this memorandum. All of 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.

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

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

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|  | **Criteria** | **Argosy Collegiate Charter School** | **Berkshire Arts and Technology Charter Public School** | **Hill View Montessori Charter Public School** | **Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School, Springfield** | **River Valley Charter School** | **Salem Academy Charter School** |
| **Faithfulness to Charter** | 1. Mission and Key Design  Elements | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Partially Meets** | ** Partially Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** |
| 2. Access and Equity | ** Partially Meets** | ** Partially Meets** | ** Partially Meets** | ** Partially Meets** | ** Partially Meets** | ** Meets** |
| 4. Dissemination | ** Partially Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** |
| **Academic Program Success** | 5. Student Performance | **Requiring assistance or intervention**  **5th percentile** | **Not requiring assistance or intervention**  **80th percentile** | **Not requiring assistance or intervention**  **28th percentile** | **Insufficient Data** | **Not requiring assistance or intervention**  **74th percentile** | **Not requiring assistance or intervention**  **83rd percentile** |
| **Organizational Viability** | 9. Governance | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** |
| Commissioner Action | | Renewed with Conditions | Unconditional Renewal | Renewed with Conditions | Renewed with Conditions | Unconditional Renewal | Unconditional Renewal |

**Argosy Collegiate Charter School**

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| **Type of Charter**  (Commonwealth or Horace Mann) | Commonwealth | **Location** | Fall River |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region**  (if applicable) | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 2014 | **Year(s) Renewed**  (if applicable) | N/A |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 644 | **Current Enrollment** | 466 (as of October 2018) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 6-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 6-10 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 216 (as of March 2018) | **Current Age of School** | 5 |
| **Mission Statement**  The mission of Argosy Collegiate Charter School is to provide all scholars in grades 6 through 12 with a seamless middle to high school education that educates them for a rigorous and relevant four-year college degree and ensures they are able to compete in a 21st century global economy. Argosy Collegiate Charter School prepares Fall River’s diverse community of learners with the academic foundation and character values necessary to be successful in college, career, and life. | | | |

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

**Condition 1**: By February 28, 2019, ACCS must submit evidence to the Department that it has provided the school community with notice of the school’s renewal with conditions that the school must meet. The school must inform parents/guardians, teachers, staff, board members, and students of the school’s current status.

**Condition 2**: By August 1, 2019, ACCS must demonstrate that it has hired properly qualified staff to deliver English learner instruction.

**Condition 3**: By December 31, 2020, the school must demonstrate that it is an academic success by providing evidence that the school has exhibited significant and sustained academic improvement in mathematics, English language arts, and science. If ACCS does not demonstrate academic improvement by December 31, 2019, the Commissioner and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will take further action including, but not limited to, placing the school on probation.

**Berkshire Arts and Technology Charter Public School**

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| **Type of Charter**  (Commonwealth or Horace Mann) | Commonwealth | **Location** | Adams |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional | **Districts in Region**  (if applicable) | Adams-Cheshire, Clarksburg, Florida, Hancock, Lanesborough, Mt. Greylock, North Adams, Pittsfield, Savoy, Williamstown |
| **Year Opened** | 2004 | **Year(s) Renewed**  (if applicable) | 2009, 2014 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 363 | **Current Enrollment** | 378[[1]](#footnote-1) (as of October 2018) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 6-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 6-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 11 (as of March 2018) | **Current Age of School** | 15 |
| **Mission Statement**  BART Charter Public School prepares students for college by promoting mastery of academic skills and content with a strong foundation in arts and technology. The school provides middle and high school students in Berkshire County with an educational community that regards everyone, including teachers and parents, as lifelong learners. | | | |

**Hill View Montessori Charter Public School**

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| **Type of Charter**  (Commonwealth or Horace Mann) | Commonwealth | **Location** | Haverhill |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region**  (if applicable) | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 2004 | **Year(s) Renewed**  (if applicable) | 2009, 2014 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 306 | **Current Enrollment** | 304 (as of October 2018) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | K-8 | **Current Grade Span** | K-8 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 294 (as of March 2018) | **Current Age of School** | 15 |
| **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. | | | |

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

**Condition 1**: By February 28, 2019, HVMCPS must submit evidence to the Department that it has provided the school community with notice of the school’s renewal with conditions that the school must meet. The school must inform parents/guardians, teachers, staff, board members, and students of the school’s current status.

**Condition 2**: By April 30, 2019, the **board of trustees** must review the school’s program and submit an action plan to the Department that addresses areas in need of improvement. The review and action plan must address at least the following areas: the degree to which the school’s program aligns with the school’s mission and key design elements; the degree to which the program for 7th and 8th grade aligns to the mission and provides academic excellence; the school’s processes to identify students who need supports; and the school’s self-evaluation of its special education and English learner programs.

**Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School, Springfield**

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| **Type of Charter**  (Commonwealth or Horace Mann) | Commonwealth | **Location** | Springfield |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional | **Districts in Region**  (if applicable) | Springfield, Holyoke, Chicopee |
| **Year Opened** | 2014 | **Year(s) Renewed**  (if applicable) | N/A |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 250 | **Current Enrollment** | 198 (as of October 2018) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 9-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 9-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 0 (as of March 2018) | **Current Age of School** | 5 |
| **Mission Statement**  Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School, Springfield challenges resilient, disconnected students with rigorous academics and relentless supports, so they take ownership of their futures and succeed in high school, college and as self-sufficient adults. | | | |

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

**Condition 1**: By February 28, 2019, PAPCHSS must submit evidence to the Department that it has provided the school community with notice of the school’s renewal with conditions that the school must meet. The school must inform parents/guardians, teachers, staff, board members, and students of the school’s current status.

**Condition 2**: By April 30, 2019, the **board of trustees** must conduct a comprehensive review of PAPCHSS’s program and submit an action plan to the Department that addresses areas in need of improvement as outlined in the Summary of Review.

**Condition 3**: By August 1, 2019, PAPCHSS must demonstrate that it will provide physical education instruction as required by Massachusetts state law, G.L. c 71, § 3.

**River Valley Charter School**

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| **Type of Charter**  (Commonwealth or Horace Mann) | Commonwealth | **Location** | Newburyport |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional | **Districts in Region**  (if applicable) | Amesbury, Newburyport, Triton (Newbury and Salisbury), Pentucket (West Newbury) |
| **Year Opened** | 1999 | **Year(s) Renewed**  (if applicable) | 2004, 2009, 2014 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 288 | **Current Enrollment** | 288 (as of October 2018) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | K-8 | **Current Grade Span** | K-8 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 168 (as of March 2018) | **Current Age of School** | 20 |
| **Mission Statement**  The mission of River Valley Charter School is to provide a rigorous academic program based on the Montessori philosophy and rooted in the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. Students will reach their full potential as scholars and become self-reliant and productive members of society. They will be adept at critical thinking and creative problem solving and will be fully prepared to succeed in future schools, careers, and civic life. | | | |

**Salem Academy Charter School**

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| **Type of Charter**  (Commonwealth or Horace Mann) | Commonwealth | **Location** | Salem |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region**  (if applicable) | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 2004 | **Year(s) Renewed**  (if applicable) | 2009, 2014 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 480 | **Current Enrollment** | 491[[2]](#footnote-2) (as of October 2018) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 6-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 6-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 246 (as of March 2018) | **Current Age of School** | 15 |
| **Mission Statement**  Salem Academy Charter School is a small 6th – 12th grade public school designed to educate the City of Salem’s diverse student population. Through a unique integration of college preparatory classes with service to the community, the school graduates informed, articulate and proactive individuals of strong character. | | | |

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

Attachments: [Charter Schools – Notification of Intended Actions](http://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2019/2019-02/item8-intended-actions.docx)

1. The school is currently overenrolled by 15 students and as a result is out of compliance with the terms of its charter. Charter schools do not receive tuition for students enrolled above the school’s maximum enrollment. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The school is currently overenrolled by 11 students and as a result is out of compliance with the terms of its charter. Charter schools do not receive tuition for students enrolled above the school’s maximum enrollment. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)