

Charter School Performance Criteria

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**Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

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## Overview

The Charter School Performance Criteria (Criteria) are presented in the three guiding areas of charter school accountability defined in the current regulations, 603 CMR 1.00: faithfulness to charter, academic program success, and organizational viability.

The purposes of the Criteria are to:

* Articulate the expectations for all aspects of charter school accountability, from the application process to the renewal process;
* Provide charter schools with clear guidance about how the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board), the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department), and the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education (Commissioner) define charter school success and on what basis charter schools will be evaluated; and
* Clarify the connections between Massachusetts charter school accountability and state and federal accountability standards.

The Department evaluates the Criteria through the use of quantitative and/or qualitative data as well as affirmative evidence presented by the school, compiled over the course of the school’s charter term.

## Principles Guiding the Development and Revision of the Criteria

The Criteria were first developed in 2005 and were subsequently revised in 2010. The Department developed the third revision (Version 3.0) in 2013 after research and review of best practices from other high quality charter school authorizers and made slight annual revisions to the Criteria in subsequent years to clarify the meaning of certain criteria or key indicators. The Department developed the fourth major revision (Version 4.0) in 2018 to include clear guidelines for charter schools to work toward the elimination of persistent achievement, access, and opportunity gaps experienced by historically underserved students.

The following principles guided the development and/or subsequent revisions of the Criteria:

* **Preserve operational and programmatic autonomy.** The Department must ensure that the Criteria protect the autonomies that allow charter schools to determine the means by which they achieve student outcomes. Nothing in these Criteria shall be interpreted to require a charter school to adopt a particular model, mission, or program.[[1]](#footnote-2)
* **Clarify all aspects of charter school performance.** The Criteria are structured to ensure that all key aspects of charter school performance are integrated, while reducing redundancy and prioritizing key areas.
* **Facilitate clear communication about charter school performance.** The Criteria allow the Department to clearly communicate to schools about performance through the site visit or renewal processes.
* **Ground revisions in research, best practices, and stakeholder input.** Every substantial revision of these Criteria has been grounded in education research and best practices from other high quality charter school authorizers. In addition, any revision has been presented to charter and traditional public school stakeholders, policymakers, and advocates.
* **Align to the** [**Massachusetts School and District Accountability System**](http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/)**[[2]](#footnote-3) and the** [**District Standards and Indicators**](http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/documentation.html)**.** To the greatest extent possible without infringing on charter school autonomy, as noted above, the Department aligned the Criteria with revisions to the new Massachusetts School and District Accountability System required by the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act. Furthermore, with the elimination of the Conditions for School Effectiveness, the 2018 version of the Criteria was revised to better align to the expectations contained in the Massachusetts District Standards and Indicators.
* **Balance clear performance expectations with Commissioner and Board discretion.** The Criteria clearly outline performance expectations for charter schools, but do not formulaically dictate high stakes accountability decisions, including new charter awards, conditions, probation, revocation, and/or renewal decisions. Though the Criteria are presented in a linear, numbered format for reference purposes, a charter school must demonstrate affirmative evidence of success in all three guiding areas of charter school accountability, and the Commissioner and/or the Board ultimately make these high-stakes decisions based on the totality of evidence presented by the charter school. The Commissioner and/or the Board have the discretion to consider all qualitative and quantitative factors when making these decisions, though improvement in student achievement for all student groups is of paramount importance.
* **Ensure the Criteria evaluate school performance with an equity lens.** The 2018 revision establishes specific guidelines regarding efforts schools can make to eliminate historical achievement and opportunity gaps. In particular, and in alignment with revisions outlined in the Massachusetts District Standards and Indicators, the Department has prioritized the implementation of specific and measurable actions that schools can take to reduce gaps affecting historically underserved groups. While each Criteria or key indicator found below may not specifically reference equity, the Department will examine the extent to which a charter school is removing inequities based upon visible identities, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, sex, gender-identity, disability, language proficiency, sexual orientation, national origin, and religion related to any area of the Criteria as needed.

## Definitions of Terms Used in This Document

The foundational resources for the definitions below are [District Standards and Indicators](https://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators.pdf#search=%22district%20standards%20indicators%22) (2019 revision), [Multi-Tiered System of Support](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/), [Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Schools and Classrooms](http://www.doe.mass.edu/odl/e-learning/culturally-resp-sust/content/index.html#/lessons/AiTU1tnJ3CuQO6t1IGdXo60vEWEUrQtp), and the [Educator Effectiveness Guidebook for Inclusive Practice](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/), unless otherwise noted.

* **All students:** Given that some student groups have been historically underserved, and also that any student can be particularly “vulnerable” at any moment in time, it is important to consider practices and outcomes beyond the aggregate to ensure that all students are challenged and supported to learn and grow. The phrase “all” in this document refers to equity for and attention to students from all backgrounds and identities and experiences. These include but are not limited to all races and ethnicities, all genders and gender identities, all sexual orientations, all disabilities, all nationalities, all types of citizenship or immigration status, all religions, all family structures, all family housing situations, all medical/health needs, and all traumatic experiences.
* **Culturally proficient and culturally responsive**: Culturally proficient policies and practices enable staff members and students to interact effectively in a culturally diverse environment in which students’ backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges are respected. Cultural responsiveness is an approach to viewing culture and identity as assets, including students’ race, ethnicity, or linguistic assets, among other characteristics. Culturally responsive policies and practices acknowledge and actively draw upon diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges of administrators, students, staff, and community as a way to deepen connections between the school and its community.
* **Disaggregated student data:** Aggregate student data that is broken down into smaller parts in order to learn about the performance, opportunities, and outcomes of specific student groups; for example, schools, grade levels, and student groups. All data analysis described in this document should be conducted in accordance with all applicable laws pertaining to the confidentiality of student data.
* **Equity:** Educational equity means ensuring and adjusting resources based on need such that all students have access to the educational resources, opportunities, and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background and/or family income to meet high expectations for cognitive, behavioral, and social-emotional growth and development.[[3]](#footnote-4)
* **Inclusive**: In an inclusive school, all organizational levels of the school recognize, support, and celebrate all students, families, and staff members to create a climate where all students, families, and staff feel equally valued and part of the school community.
* **Student group:** Any group of students who share similar characteristics, such as racial or ethnic identification, gender identification, socioeconomic status, physical or learning disabilities, or language skills.[[4]](#footnote-5) This includes, but is not limited to, the groups of students for which the Department issues annual performance determinations.[[5]](#footnote-6)

## Using the Criteria During the Charter Term

Charter schools are encouraged to refer to the Criteria on a continuing basis to inform planning and as a means of self-assessing the overall health and viability of their school throughout the charter term. The Department will collect and provide information on performance against the Criteria through analysis of data submitted by schools and the charter school site visit process.

## Using the Criteria for Charter Renewal Decision-Making

Every charter school undergoes a renewal process during the final year of its charter term to determine whether the school can continue to operate. The renewal process includes the submission of a renewal application, a renewal inspection visit, and an analysis of all evidence related to the charter school’s performance, including quantitative and qualitative evidence collected through the Department’s charter school accountability process. The Criteria provide the performance benchmarks and lens of inquiry for the renewal inspection visit and for subsequent Department analysis, with a primary focus on the subset of criteria that are directly related to the statutory and regulatory requirements for renewal.[[6]](#footnote-7) This subset includes evidence related to Criterion 1: Mission and Key Design Elements; Criterion 2: Access and Equity; Criterion 3: Compliance; Criterion 4: Dissemination; Criterion 5: Student Performance; and Criterion 9: Governance.

## Rating Scale to Facilitate Clear Communication About Charter School Performance

In order to communicate clearly, the Department uses a rating system to summarize a charter school’s performance against the Criteria. The rating scale below is used for most criteria evaluated at renewal and during site visits. Additional details regarding the rating scale are outlined in the [Renewal Inspection Protocol](https://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/acct.html?section=renew) and in the [Site Visit Protocol](https://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/acct.html?section=visit).

**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 concerns are noted.

## Charter School Performance Criteria

**Faithfulness to Charter**

1. Mission and Key Design Elements
2. Access and Equity
3. Compliance
4. Dissemination

**Academic Program Success**

1. Student Performance
2. Program Delivery
3. School Climate and Family Engagement

**Organizational Viability**

1. Capacity
2. Governance
3. Finance

### **Criterion 1: Mission and Key Design Elements**

The school is faithful to its mission, implements the key design elements outlined in its charter, and substantially meets its accountability plan goals.

*Key indicators include but are not limited to:*

1. The school is faithful to its approved mission.
2. The school has fully implemented the key design elements[[7]](#footnote-8) in the approved charter and any subsequently approved amendments in a manner that serves all of its students.
3. School stakeholders share a common and consistent understanding of the school’s mission and key design elements outlined in the charter.
4. The school substantially meets the goals articulated in its accountability plan by the time of the renewal of its charter.

### **Criterion 2: Access and Equity**

The school ensures access and equity for all students eligible to attend the school.

*Key indicators include but are not limited to:*

1. The school seeks to ensure access to the program and equity for all students eligible to attend the school.The school eliminates barriers to program access, including but not limited to, providing translated materials[[8]](#footnote-9) and ensuring that information is readily available to parents, students, the general public, and prospective applicants regarding non-discriminatory enrollment practices. The school also advertises the availability of specialized programs and services at the school to meet the needs of all students, including but not limited to students with disabilities and English learners.
2. The school annually updates and receives approval for a student recruitment and retention plan that includes deliberate, specific strategies the school will use to ensure the ongoing provision of equal educational opportunity to students during and after enrollment. The plan is customized for each school and designed to attract, enroll, and retain a student population that is demographically comparable to the population that is enrolled in similar grades in schools from which the charter school might enroll students. The school addresses any identified disparities in enrollment, retention, and/or attrition through annual updates to its Recruitment and Retention Plan.
3. The school uses active strategies from its Recruitment and Retention Plan to enroll and retain a student population that is demographically comparable to the population of students enrolled in similar grades in schools from which the charter school enrolls students.
4. School policies and practices allow all students to have equal rights of access to the opportunities provided by the educational program, such as rigorous courses, mission driven programming, and other educational opportunities.This includes, but is not limited to,a disaggregated by subgroup review of the school’s rates of in-school and out-of-school suspensions and emergency removals compared to the state and compared to the school’s rates for all students.

### **Criterion 3: Compliance**

The school operates in compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable federal and state laws and regulations regarding public charter schools.

*Key indicators include but are not limited to:*

1. The school is operated in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws including, but not limited to, M.G.L. c. 71, § 89, and 603 CMR 1.00 and all other applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, required trainings and deadlines, and such additional guidance as the Department may from time to time establish.
2. The school complies with all federal and state legal requirements for public charter schools, including but not limited to: the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA-2015); the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-2004); Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; together with related state requirements (see [Coordinated Program Review requirements](https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/cpr/) for additional information); Student Learning Time regulations; and Public Records Law. In addition, the school complies with all federal, state, and local requirements regarding health and safety.
3. The school undertakes corrective action when needed and implements necessary safeguards to maintain compliance with all legal requirements.

### **Criterion 4: Dissemination**

The school provides innovative models for replication and best practices to other public schools in the district where the charter school is located.

*Notes:*

The Department will also consider 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, including but 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**

The school consistently makes progress in student academic achievement for all students as defined by the statewide accountability system.

*Notes:*

* In June 2018, the Board voted to approve regulations outlining Massachusetts’ new statewide system of accountability and assistance under the ESSA. Charter schools, like all Massachusetts public schools, must administer statewide assessments and will receive results as outlined by the new statewide system of accountability. During the transition period, the Department may consider results from MCAS, PARCC, and Next Generation MCAS assessments when assessing charter school performance. Data from the legacy 10th grade MCAS will also be used for site visit reports and accountability decision-making.
* The period of evaluation will focus on the beginning of the charter term through the end of the penultimate year of the charter term. For example, if a school’s charter term ran from July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2020, the data under consideration included results available through the end of the 2018-19 school year. For renewal terms, the last year of the prior charter term will be considered as a baseline for the next charter term, and longer term historical trends may also be considered.
* Performance standards are primarily based on state 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 all accountability subgroups as defined by the statewide accountability system unless otherwise indicated.
* In the event that a school believes that the statewide accountability indicators are not fully representative of student performance at the school, the Department may review additional valid and reliable data demonstrating the progress the school has made in demonstrating academic progress. The most compelling evidence will point to consistent performance improvements over the charter term. In addition, while the Department will consider other assessment data as supplementary evidence for a school’s performance, it will not supplant state assessment results with other assessment results. The charter school may supply additional sources of data to support the Department’s review of proven provider and/or charter school expansion requests.
* The Department reserves the right to revise the measures used in this criterion in order to accommodate changes in state assessments, metrics, or accountability requirements, including any new U.S. Department of Education requirements that may be enacted during the charter term.

### **Criterion 6: Program Delivery**

The school delivers a high quality academic program that meets the needs of all students.

*Key indicators include but are not limited to:*

1. **Curriculum:** The school’s documented curriculum is aligned to state curriculum frameworks and expectations;[[9]](#footnote-10) is aligned vertically between grades and horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level; provides lessons and materials that represent a variety of cultures and perspectives; and supports opportunities for all students to master these skills and concepts. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and revised.
2. **Instruction:** The school staff has a common understanding of high-quality instruction. Instructional practices are aligned to this common understanding. Instructional practices are based on high expectations for all students and reflect cultural proficiency. Instruction fosters student engagement. Classroom environments are conducive to learning.
3. **Assessment and Program Evaluation:** Teachers and administrators use disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data to modify instruction to improve academic and non-academic outcomes for all students and subgroups. School staff and administrators use disaggregated data to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of its program to serve all students and modify the program in order to improve student outcomes.
4. **Supports for All Learners:** The school has a proactive system to effectively identify and address all students’ strengths and needs for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional development through a tiered support model. Data and progress monitoring are used to ensure that all students across all subgroups have equal access and equitable support, interventions, and resources to achieve, grow, and advance. The school regularly uses data to evaluate and modify its support programming to ensure student success.

### **Criterion 7: School Climate and Family Engagement**

The school creates safe, positive, healthy, culturally responsive, inclusive, and welcoming learning environments. These environments cultivate supportive, authentic relationships and a strong sense of belonging and connection, which value the diverse assets and voices of all students, staff, and families.

*Key indicators include but are not limited to:*

1. **Safe and Supportive Environment:** The school ensures that school and classroom environments are safe, supportive, culturally responsive, welcoming, respectful, inclusive, and reflective of the community and students’ cultures and identities. The school creates an environment that supports all students’ sense of belonging and helps students develop social and emotional knowledge, skills, and competencies for a multicultural world.
2. **Family Engagement**: The school develops effective relationships with all families/guardians and effectively communicates with them about the academic progress and social emotional well-being of students. The school partners with families in ways that are culturally responsive, collaborative, and that demonstrate inclusion for all kinds of languages, norms, family structures, and values.

### **Criterion 8: Capacity**

The school sustains a well-functioning organizational structure and creates a professional, inclusive, respectful, and welcoming working climate for all staff.

*Key indicators include but are not limited to:*

1. **School Systems and Leadership:**
2. The school’s leadership team implements school academic programming and operations in a manner to meet a clearly defined mission and set of goals. The school defines and delineates clear roles and responsibilities among leaders, staff, management, and board of trustee members. The school has clear and well-understood systems for decision-making and communication processes among all members of the school community.
3. School leadership fosters a culture of accountability, trust, and collaboration with school stakeholders to promote joint responsibility for student learning. Based on data, school leadership takes concrete and ambitious steps to close identified student achievement, access, and opportunity gaps. School leadership sets goals and establishes systems and structures for the recruitment, development, and retention of educators reflective of the racial and ethnic composition of the students and families it serves. School leadership ensures an inclusive, respectful environment for all staff.
4. **Professional Climate and Standards for Performance:**
5. The school staff frequently collaborate and engage in professional development to improve implementation of the curriculum and instructional practice. The school implements a comprehensive professional learning culture that supports the development of effective educators. The school develops staff capacity to examine and dismantle implicit biases and systemic inequalities in order to create environments in which all students can deeply learn, grow, and thrive.
6. All school staff are provided the tools and resources to perform their responsibilities and meet expectations for performance. An objective and transparent system is in place for monitoring individual staff performance against established expectations, which includes a formal process of evaluation for all employees, including teachers.
7. **Contractual Relationships**:
8. (If applicable) The board of trustees and school leadership establish effective working relationships with their management company while maintaining appropriate separation between the entities. Changes in the school’s relationship with its management company comply with required charter amendment procedures.
9. (If applicable) An effective working relationship exists between the board of trustees and school leadership of a Horace Mann charter school and the host district, which operates under one or more memoranda of understanding (MOU) that clearly articulate the relationship with the host district regarding services, including but not limited to, facilities, funding, and waivers of collective bargaining agreement provisions.[[10]](#footnote-11) The board of trustees works to ensure that the memorandum or memoranda, as applicable, are implemented appropriately.

### **Criterion 9: Governance**

Members of the board of trustees meet their responsibilities under Massachusetts law and act as responsible public agents, providing competent and appropriate governance that ensures the success and sustainability of the school.

*Key indicators include but are not limited to:*

1. **Legal and Fiduciary Responsibilities:** 
   1. Board of trustee members are active and engaged; know and fulfill their legal responsibilities and obligations; exercise their fiduciary duties of care and loyalty; comply with the board’s bylaws; and always act in the best interests of the school community.
   2. The board of trustees demonstrates appropriate oversight of the charter school administration, financial health, progress towards meeting academic and other goals consistent with the mission and other terms of the charter and does so without managing the day-to-day operations of the school. This includes hiring, evaluating, and removing, if necessary, qualified personnel or management organization (if applicable) to manage the charter school’s day-to-day operations and holds these parties accountable for meeting specified goals.
2. **Culture of Collaboration:** The board of trustees has clear and well-understood systems for decision-making and communication processes; board of trustee’s meetings are designed to foster open, deliberate, and thorough discussions that facilitate and ensure public accountability.
3. **Focus on Improvement:** The board of trustees engages in strategic and continuous improvement planning by setting, and regularly monitoring progress relative to, priorities and goals that are aligned with the school’s mission, vision, and educational philosophy. This includes ensuring sustainability of the school by establishing clear processes for board of trustees and school leadership succession; and recruiting, selecting, orienting and training members with skills, expertise, and connections to the community that enables the board of trustees to sustain an excellent school. The board of trustees regularly reviews disaggregated student data to ensure that the school’s academic program is a success for all students.

### **Criterion 10: Finance**

The school maintains sound and stable finances and operates in a financially sound and publicly accountable manner.

*Key indicators include but are not limited to:*

1. The school maintains a sound and stable financial condition and demonstrates a history of positive net assets, adequate cash flow to sustain operations and support the academic program, as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators reported in the [Massachusetts Charter School Financial Dashboard](https://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/finance/dashboard/).
2. The school develops an annual budget that can be sustained by enrollment and other sources of historically stable revenue. The school uses all available allocated funding effectively to support student performance, opportunities, and outcomes. Student performance has been used to set budget priorities.
3. The school uses an accurate accounting system and engages in appropriate budgetary planning, budget oversight, and budget revision.
4. The school has and maintains appropriate internal controls that are documented in written fiscal policies and procedures.
5. The school follows generally accepted accounting principles as evidenced by independent financial audits with unqualified audit opinions and limited findings that the school quickly corrects.

## Sources of Evidence

In order to assess charter school performance against the Criteria, the Department will consider a wide body of evidence that includes, but is not limited to, those that follow:

* Accountability Plan
* Recruitment and retention plans
* Enrollment numbers and student demographic profile
* Enrollment policy and procedures
* Codes of conduct
* Discipline data
* Opening procedures activities
* Dissemination efforts
* Coordinated Program Review (CPR) reports & Mid-Cycle Review reports
* Complaints received and resolution status
* Documentation of current certificate of occupancy, health, safety, and fire inspections
* Materials made publicly available by the school such as website, application, and promotional documents.
* Annual financial audits
* Charter School End of Year Financial Reports
* Budgets
* Capital plans
* Board of trustees minutes
* Policy documents
* Board of trustees self-evaluation or self-study
* Evaluation forms for school staff, including: head of school and/or school leadership; educators; administrators
* Handbooks for families, staff, students, and/or board members
* Operations manuals, including fiscal policies and procedures manuals
* Professional development calendars and/or agendas
* Contract and/or MOU
* School leadership and board of trustee member composition
* State assessment scores (MCAS, Next Generation MCAS)
* Student growth percentile (SGP) data
* Performance within the statewide accountability system
* Sub-group analysis (including those that may be statistically insignificant for state reporting purposes) for English learners and special education students
* Classroom observations
* Focus group interviews
* Assessment data collected and reported by the school
* Curriculum documents
* Internal program evaluation reports
* School Safety Discipline Report (SSDR)
* District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)
* Special education and English learner education program self-evaluations
* Parent/family/teacher/staff surveys
* Original charter application
* Charter amendments
* Annual reports
* Site visit reports
* Data derived from the Student Information Management System (SIMS) and the Educator Personnel Information Management System (EPIMS)
* Summaries of Review

1. The Criteria were developed to ensure that key purposes of charter schools “to stimulate the development of innovative programs within public education; … to provide teachers with a vehicle for establishing schools with alternative, innovative methods of educational instruction and school structure and management” (G.L. c. 71, § 89 (b)(i) and (iv)) are preserved, and that a variety of educational models (e.g., Montessori, competency-based, dual language-immersion, etc.) and programs/approaches (e.g. Sheltered-English Immersion, Transitional Bilingual Education, special education inclusion models, etc.) can demonstrate affirmative evidence of success for academic and non-academic outcomes. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The Department will revise the Criteria as necessary to reflect any subsequent changes to federal or state accountability systems. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Adapted from [Leading for Equity: Opportunities for State Education Chiefs](https://ccsso.org/resource-library/leading-equity-opportunities-state-education-chiefs) and the [National Equity Project](https://www.nationalequityproject.org/). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Adapted from [The Glossary of Education Reform](https://www.edglossary.org/student-subgroup/). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; African American or Black; Hispanic or Latino; Multi-race, non-Hispanic or Latino; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; White; economically disadvantaged students; students with disabilities; current and former English learners (ELs); and high needs students (an unduplicated count of students who are economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and/or ELs and former ELs). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. 603 CMR 1.11(2): The decision by the Board to renew a charter shall be based upon the presentation of affirmative evidence regarding the faithfulness of the school to the terms of its charter, including the extent to which the school has followed its recruitment and retention plan and has disseminated best practices in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 89(dd); the success of the school's academic program; and the viability of the school as an organization. The Department will gather evidence regarding these issues from the renewal application and from other information, including but not limited to, a school's annual reports, financial audits, test results, site visit reports, and the renewal inspection report. All charter schools will be evaluated on the same performance criteria as provided in the guidelines, provided, however, that the criteria will take into account each school's charter and accountability plan. Evidence of academic success for all students is essential for charter renewal. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Key Design Elements are aspects of the school, originally articulated in the charter application or in subsequent amendments, which make the school unique and distinct from other district or charter schools. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Materials to be translated should include, at a minimum, promotional materials, the application for enrollment, and the school website. Materials should be translated into the prevalent languages of the district. According to 603 CMR 1.05, “A language shall be deemed a prevalent language if it is the primary language of 1% or more of the district's total enrollment.” [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. The [Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html) for Mathematics and English Language Arts and Literacy issued in 2011, and revised in 2017, incorporate the Common Core State Standards. Additionally, schools are expected to integrate the World-class Design and Assessment English Language Development (WIDA ELD) standards into ELD curriculum materials and content area curricula of classes in which English learners participate. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. There are three types of Horace Mann charter schools with a set of requirements that vary by type, including the requirements for the involvement of the collective bargaining unit. To the extent provided by their charters and as agreed to in one or more memoranda of understanding, Horace Mann charter schools may be exempt from certain provisions in local collective bargaining agreements. Horace Mann charter schools enter into a memorandum of understanding with the school committee, and depending upon the type of Horace Mann, may also enter into a memorandum of understanding with the faculty or relevant collective bargaining units. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)