



# Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.  
Commissioner

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education  
**From:** Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner  
**Date:** January 14, 2011  
**Subject:** Charter Schools – Report on Conditions for North Central Charter Essential School

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In February 2007, the Board renewed the charter of North Central Charter Essential School (NCCES) with four conditions regarding academic performance and leadership structure. As of February 2009, the school met all but one of the conditions. At that time, the Board voted to extend the condition related to academic performance. The school has since met this last condition.

NCCES is a regional Commonwealth charter school located in Fitchburg. The school opened in 2002 and is chartered to serve grades seven through twelve with a maximum enrollment of 400. In 2010-11, NCCES serves 366 students. The school draws approximately half of its students from Fitchburg, with students also enrolling from Leominster, Gardner, North Middlesex, Ashburnham-Westminster, and other communities in central Massachusetts.

The school's mission statement is: "NCCES is a free public school where students are known personally, challenged intellectually, and expected to participate actively in their learning. Guided by our commitment to diversity and inclusiveness, our goal is to send graduates into the world who think for themselves, care about others, and act creatively and responsibly."

### **Condition Regarding Academic Performance**

The following condition was imposed in February 2009:

By December of 2009, North Central Charter Essential School shall demonstrate that it is an academic success by:

- a. providing evidence that the school has met academic growth targets in English language arts and mathematics, as established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, or has achieved Adequate Yearly Progress in the

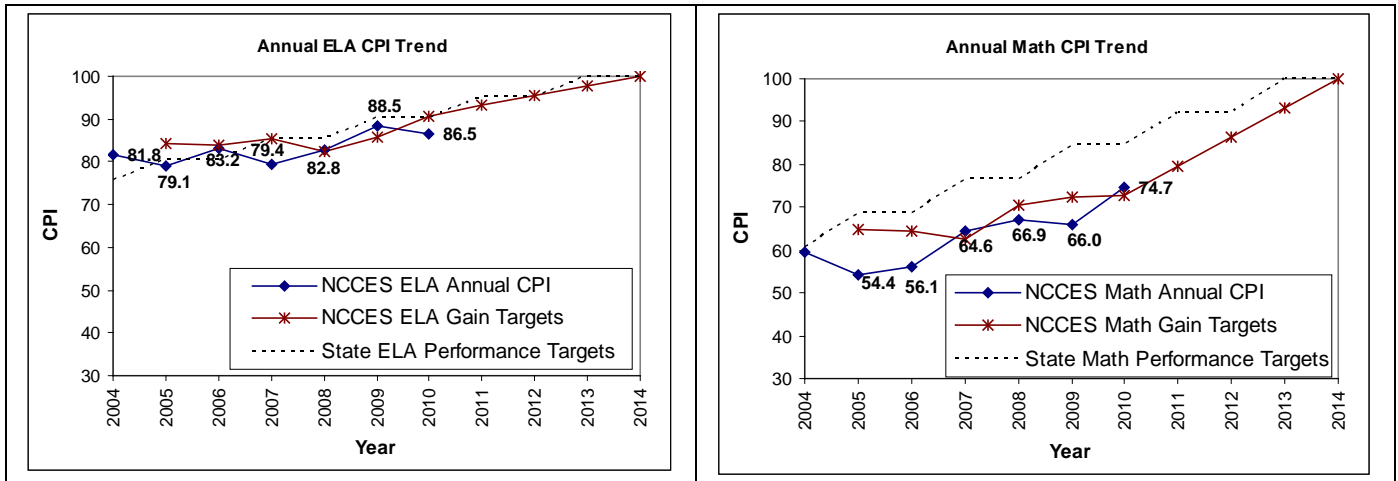
aggregate and for all statistically significant subgroups in English language arts and mathematics; and

- b. providing evidence that the school has met or is making substantial progress toward meeting all benchmarks in its Accountability Plan.

The school has met this condition. In 2010, NCCES achieved the following median student growth percentiles: 46.0 for English language arts (ELA) and 50.0 for mathematics.<sup>1</sup> The data show that, in 2010, NCCES students’ academic performance improved at a rate better than 46 percent of students statewide in ELA and by a rate better than 50 percent of students statewide in mathematics. Furthermore, the school’s growth percentiles have increased for both mathematics and ELA over the past two years. These data demonstrate typical growth, thus meeting Department targets and the condition imposed.

<b>NCCES Median Student Growth Percentiles (SGP)</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>ELA (all grades)</b>	44.0	44.5	46.0
<b>Mathematics (all grades)</b>	33.0	37.5	50.0

In 2010, NCCES made AYP in mathematics, but not for ELA. The performance rating for ELA is “High” and for mathematics is “Moderate.” In 2010, NCCES achieved a CPI of 86.5 in ELA. NCCES has greatly improved its aggregate mathematics CPI, showing an upward trend over the past five years. In 2005 the school’s mathematics CPI was 54.4. By 2010, the school had increased its CPI by 20 points, to 74.7.



Additionally, for the 2009-10 school year, NCCES met, or was making progress towards

<sup>1</sup> A student growth percentile (abbreviated SGP) measures how much a student's performance has improved from one year to the next relative to his or her academic peers: other students statewide with a similar MCAS test score history. The median student growth percentile is the midpoint of student growth percentiles in the school.

meeting, a majority of the goals in its accountability plan regarding its faithfulness to its charter, academic success, and organizational viability.

Based upon this information, I recommend that the Board vote to eliminate the remaining condition on NCCES's charter. A motion is enclosed.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Barry Barnett, Interim Director of Charter Schools; Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner; or me.

Attachment: Motion