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January 9, 2012

Marlon Davis  
Director, Charter School Office  
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148

Dear Mr. Davis,

The LCCPS Board of Trustees is sending this letter to request that the Charter School Office (CSO) and Commissioner Chester amend or remove the conditions placed on the Lowell Community Charter Public School (LCCPS) in April of 2010. We are requesting this action to allow the school to continue the work accomplished to date as we strive to offer a viable and successful educational program for our current and future students and families. We are pleased with the progress achieved as evidenced in our state assessment results and as documented in site visits conducted by the MA CSO. While we are gratified by the affirmations of the many positive changes made, we know now how much work there is left to do and have committed ourselves to ongoing achievement and excellence.

We are writing to request that we be allowed keep Grade 7 in 2012-2013 and to re-open Grade 8 in 2013 -2014. It is crucial that we be allowed to create a structure that will provide a comprehensive grades K – 8 program that enables our students to achieve high levels of success before going to high school. Our data show that parents would choose to stay at LCCPS given the option, giving us more time to continue our work with their students. As reported to CSO staff and acknowledged in the preliminary findings in our most recent site visit, the reduction in enrollment required by the conditions placed on the school is a significant obstacle to providing a viable and stable environment for our students and families. We cannot continue to make the progress that we are making while enduring the turnover in staff and students we are facing and will continue to face with the reduced enrollment and grade level targets.

In order to keep faith with the DESE goal of not de-enrolling anyone, we cut back on our Kindergarten (K) program. However, parents of these kindergarteners who had older children at the school then took them out in search for one school to serve their children. This led to

turnover that was harmful to us and to our families. They wanted to stay but they needed both K and the upper grades in one location. We are requesting that we be allowed to enroll 750 students in 2012-2013 and 2013- 2014, while planning for a school with an ultimate enrollment of 700 students by fall of 2017. We have a bubble in the middle grades which will pass through as we only accept 70 students at each grade level. This will allow us to use attrition to reduce our size while adding grades 7 and 8. It will also allow us to loop teachers with classes until we reach a permanent structure, avoiding yearly layoffs.

Key to our success, particularly with English language and struggling learners, is our Early Childhood Program (Kindergarten Readiness and Kindergarten). Sufficient time in a strong language-based, early childhood program is providing our young learners with much needed language development and academic readiness. Currently, our data show that we expect more than 70% of our K students will enter Grade 1 ready to read or already reading, because of their two years in our Early Childhood Program. Our success in meeting AYP for our ELL students this year is a strong indicator of the success of this approach. Our 2011 MCAS results shows that student growth at LCCPS is, on average, outpacing student growth in the Lowell Public schools. Attached please find data about our academic performance for your reference.

We are committed to building our school into a model for other diverse urban communities. We appreciate the decision last year to allow us to keep Grades 5 and 6 open. A decision to support these requested changes will provide us with the infrastructure we need to continue our growth and improvement and to serve as a resource for excellence in education in the City of Lowell. If you have further questions about this please feel free to contact me or Kathy Egmont, Head of School.

Respectfully,

Dr. Carol Keirstead, Chair  
LCCPS Board of Trustees