*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| 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:** | January 31, 2019 |
| **Subject:** | Renewal of Charters – Notification of Intended Actions for Boston Preparatory Charter Public School, Conservatory Lab Charter School, Hampden Charter School of Science East, KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School, and Roxbury Preparatory 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.”

Applications to renew charters are under consideration for the five schools addressed in this memorandum. Under the authority delegated to the Commissioner in February 2013, I intend to renew the charters of three schools unconditionally. These schools are Boston Preparatory Charter Public School (BPCPS), Hampden Charter School of Science East (HCSS East), and KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School (KALCS). I also intend to renew with conditions the charters of Conservatory Lab Charter School (CLCS) and Roxbury Preparatory Charter School (RPCS).

The superintendents of the districts sending students to these schools were invited to submit written comment regarding the charter renewals. The Department received comment from Nancy Farrell, vice-chair of the West Springfield School Committee, regarding the renewal of HCSS East. Vice-chair Farrell compares the demographics, academic results, retention rates, and percent of licensed teachers of the West Springfield Public Schools to HCSS East and requests that the charter for HCSS East not be renewed. These concerns are addressed in the summative evidence found below for HCSS East. The comment is attached.

Please let me know by **Thursday, February 7, 2019**, 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**

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. These areas are 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 charter school statute and the process outlined in the memorandum dated October 7, 2013, regarding [Considerations for Charter School Renewal.](http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=7802)

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 renewal decisions are made based upon the totality of evidence as presented in the Summaries of Review. Summaries of Review for each school are attached to this memorandum. Student academic achievement and improvement in student achievement for all student groups are of paramount importance. A rating system is used to communicate how well each school is meeting expectations of the Criteria. Failure to meet individual 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 consider all qualitative and quantitative factors when making these decisions.

**Presentation of Evidence for Charter Renewal**

This memorandum contains summary evidence related to each school’s performance on a sub-set of the Criteria that are directly related to the statutory and regulatory requirements for renewal of charters.[[1]](#footnote-1) The Summaries of Review present evidence related to a sub-set of the Criteria including 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. The Department, however, continues to gather evidence regarding all of the Criteria through ongoing monitoring processes.

The chart on page 6 of this memorandum provides a dashboard with a summary of ratings for the five schools for which I intend to renew charters. Beginning on page 7 of the memorandum, I provide a brief summary of the evidence on which I based my decisions. Attached to this memorandum is the Summary of Review for each of the five schools. Below, I provide further information regarding each Criterion contained in the Summaries of Review that may be of particular interest and provide context for the ratings.

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

The charter school statute states that the Board shall consider whether the school has met its obligations and commitments under the charter. G.L. c. 71, § 89(dd). Further, the charter school regulations state that the decision by the Board to renew a charter shall be based upon the affirmative evidence regarding the faithfulness of the school to the terms of its charter. 603 CMR 1.11(2). The degree to which a charter school is implementing its mission, vision, and key design elements is assessed through charter school accountability site visits and a renewal inspection visit. Additionally, each charter term, schools create accountability plans to articulate their own mission-driven objectives and measures. Charter schools report on the accountability plan annually and aim to meet the objectives by the end of each charter term. Each Summary of Review reflects the school’s performance on its accountability plan and includes the accountability plan in Appendix A to each Summary of Review.

**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 added in 2010. The Summaries of Review contain multiple data sources for Criterion 2 such as comparative enrollment data; comparative attrition data; comparative stability rates; 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. Criterion 2 also provides evidence about the accessibility of the school’s programming and contains data pertaining to suspension rates, both for all students and for subgroups.

Appendix B to each Summary of Review provides enrollment data for subgroups and attrition and stability data for all students and the high needs subgroup at the charter school. Each Summary of Review then compares this 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](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/finance/chart/) (“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. The enrollment process 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 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.

**Criterion 3: Compliance**

In order to assess whether the school has met its obligations and commitments under its charter, the Department monitors whether each school is operating in accordance with the provisions of the charter school statute and regulations and all other applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, required trainings and deadlines, and such additional guidance as the Department may establish. In each Summary of Review, the Department reflects where schools may have, from time to time, been out of compliance with these requirements.

The Summaries of Review do not provide a rating for Compliance. Due to the number of items required for a public school and charter school to be in compliance with state and federal regulations and guidance, the Department does not rate this category as a composite. The Department, however, does highlight areas of compliance that a school must address and provides oversight if and when schools’ charters are renewed. If a school’s failure to comply is significant or sustained, additional actions may be warranted including, but not limited to, imposing conditions on a school’s charter.

**Criterion 4: Dissemination**

Dissemination is required for renewal of charters of Commonwealth charter schools. 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”). The Department takes into consideration the developmental age of the school in this requirement. Schools in their first charter term are still in the process of developing best practices.

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,
* assisting with 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 Academic Performance**

Charter schools, like all public schools, must administer state assessments to all students. In November 2015, the Board voted to approve the development of Massachusetts's Next-Generation MCAS assessment. In the spring of 2017 and 2018, Massachusetts public schools administered the first next-generation MCAS assessment to grades 3 through 8. Schools serving grade 10 continued to administer the legacy MCAS assessment to students in grade 10.

In September 2018, the Department introduced the results of its new statewide system of accountability aligned to requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. The Summaries of Review present the data and first determinations made by the new statewide system of accountability.

Charter schools that applied for renewal of their charter by August 1, 2018, will not face non-renewal based solely on the first determinations of the new statewide system of accountability. Academic performance, however, is always considered in determining whether to renew a charter. The data presented for charter school academic performance include each school’s historical data from the 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 statewide assessments.

**Criterion 9: Governance**

The boards of trustees of charter schools are public agents authorized by the Commonwealth to supervise and control the charter school. G.L. c. 71, § 89(c). The regulations require renewal of a charter to be based upon “the viability of the school as an organization.” 603 CMR 1.11(2). The membership of boards of charter schools is tracked through the Department’s Board Member Management System, and the Department reviews and rates governance during accountability and renewal inspection visits. The Summary of Review reflects whether the board of a charter school has been active and engaged, fulfilled its legal responsibilities and fiduciary duties of care and loyalty, followed the board’s approved bylaws, and acted in the best interests of the school. A board’s established decision-making and communication processes must demonstrate appropriate oversight and that the board engaged in strategic and continuous improvement planning to ensure the sustainability of the school.

The dashboard summarizing the performance of the five schools that I intend to renew follows.

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

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

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|  | **Criteria** | **Boston Preparatory Charter Public School** | **Conservatory Lab Charter School** | **Hampden Charter School of Science East** | **KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School** | **Roxbury Preparatory Charter School** |
| **Faithfulness to Charter** | 1. Mission and Key Design  Elements | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** |
| 2. Access and Equity | ** Meets** | ** Partially Meets** | ** Partially Meets** | ** Partially Meets** | ** Partially Meets** |
| 4. Dissemination | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** |
| **Academic Program Success** | 5. Student Performance | **Not requiring assistance or intervention**  **64th percentile** | **Requiring assistance or intervention**  **29th percentile** | **Not requiring assistance or intervention**  **74th percentile** | **Not requiring assistance or intervention**  **42nd percentile** | **Not requiring assistance or intervention**  **28th percentile** |
| **Organizational Viability** | 9. Governance | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Meets** | ** Partially Meets** | ** Meets** |
| Intended Commissioner Action | | Unconditional Renewal | Renew with Conditions[[2]](#footnote-2) | Unconditional Renewal | Unconditional Renewal | Renew with Conditions[[3]](#footnote-3) |

**Boston Preparatory 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** | 2004 | **Year(s) Renewed**  (if applicable) | 2009, 2014 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 700 | **Current Enrollment** | 526 (as of October 2018) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 6-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 6-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 1,254 (as of March 2018) | **Current Age of School** | 15 |
| **Mission Statement**  Boston Prep prepares students to succeed in four-year colleges and embody, in thought and action, lifelong ethical growth. | | | |

During its third charter term, BPCPS has demonstrated progress in student academic achievement. In 2018, BPCPS is classified as not requiring assistance or intervention, met 55 percent of its improvement targets, and is performing in the 64th percentile when compared to other middle/high schools statewide.

Over the charter term, BPCPS administered PARCC in 2015 and 2016 and Next-Generation MCAS assessments in 2017 and 2018 for grades 6-8, the legacy MCAS for science and technology/engineering in grade 8, and the legacy MCAS tests for grade 10. In 2018, 38 percent of BPCPS students in grades 6-8 met or exceeded expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS for English language arts (ELA), below the statewide average of 51 percent. In mathematics, 41 percent of students met or exceeded expectations, below the statewide average of 48 percent. In science and technology/engineering, 25 percent of grade 8 students earned proficient or advanced, below the statewide average of 35 percent. In 2018, 98 percent of BPCPS grade 10 students earned proficient or advanced in ELA and 88 percent earned proficient or advanced in mathematics. All grade 10 MCAS results were above statewide averages.

The 4-year graduation rate for the 2017 cohort at BPCPS was 86.0 percent, with 14.0 percent of the cohort still in school. The 5-year graduation rate was 82.7 percent for the 2016 cohort with 3.8 percent still in school. In 2017, the school’s dropout rate was 0.0 percent, below the statewide average of 1.8 percent.

As demonstrated in the attached Summary of Review, the school implements its mission and key design elements with fidelity, implements an approved Recruitment and Retention plan, is organizationally viable, and met a majority of the measures contained in its accountability plan. Boston Preparatory Charter Public School has disseminated its best practices to other public schools within its district and across the state.

Given all of the evidence, presented in more detail in the attached Summary of Review, I intend to renew the charter of BPCPS.

**Conservatory Lab Charter 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** | 1999 | **Year(s) Renewed**  (if applicable) | 2004, 2009, 2014 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 444 | **Current Enrollment** | 441 (as of October 2018) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | PK­­-8 | **Current Grade Span** | PK-8 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 3,145 (as of March 2018) | **Current Age of School** | 20 |
| **Mission Statement**  Conservatory Lab Charter School empowers a diverse range of children as scholars, artists, and leaders through a unique and rigorous academic and music education. We enrich the larger community through performance, service and collaboration. As a laboratory school, we develop and disseminate innovative educational approaches that will positively impact children in other schools and programs. | | | |

During its fourth charter term, CLCS has demonstrated partial progress in student academic achievement. In 2018, CLCS is classified as requiring assistance or intervention, met 77 percent of its improvement targets, and is performing in the 29th percentile when compared to other “non-high schools” statewide. A low student participation rate for English learners on the 2018 ACCESS assessment resulted in the school’s classification as requiring assistance or intervention.

Over the charter term, CLCS administered PARCC in 2015 and 2016 and Next-Generation MCAS assessments in 2017 and 2018 in grades 3-8 and the legacy MCAS for science and technology/engineering in grades 5 and 8. In 2018, 41 percent of CLCS students in grades 3-8 met or exceeded expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS for ELA, below the statewide average of 51 percent, but above those of the sending district. In mathematics, 30 percent of students met or exceed expectations, below the statewide average of 48 percent and below the sending district’s average of 32 percent. In science and technology/engineering, 21 percent of grade 5 students earned proficient or advanced, below the statewide average of 47 percent; 3 percent of grade 8 students earned proficient or advanced, below the statewide average of 35 percent.

As demonstrated in the attached Summary of Review, the school implements its mission and key design elements with fidelity and met half of the measures contained in its accountability plan. Conservatory Lab Charter School has disseminated its best practices to other public schools within its district and across the state. The school has not been successful in enrolling a demographically comparable population, provides limited translated materials to families whose first language is not English, and has increased school-year attrition rates. To remedy these issues, the school is implementing a newly approved Recruitment and Retention plan.

While the school’s board of trustees has been active and involved in their oversight roles, recent decisions by the board of trustees have led the Department to seek further clarity about the relationship among the school; its related not-for-profit foundation; and a third related not-for-profit, the Center for Artistry and Scholarship (CAS). In 2018, the school’s board of trustees decided to not report the CLCS Foundation as a component unit in the school’s annual financial audit. This decision, as well as other information in the school’s FY18 audit (which contained no findings), points to a lack of clarity among the school, the CLCS Foundation, and CAS. The Department has referred several matters pertaining to the nature of and relationship among these three entities to other state agencies for review. The Department continues to collect information about CLCS’s relationship with its foundation and CAS as well.

Given this evidence, presented in more detail in the attached Summary of Review, I intend to renew the charter of CLCS with the conditions that follow.

1. By February 28, 2019, CLCS 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.
2. By June 30, 2019 CLCS’s board of trustees must clarify the relationship among the school, the Conservatory Lab Charter School Foundation, and the Center for Artistry and Scholarship pertaining to issues including, but not limited to, services provided, funding, agreements, facilities, and staffing.
3. By November 1, 2019, the school must include in its annual financial audits all entities that should be reported as component units according to the standards of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) or an alternative plan, approved by the Department, to provide full financial transparency for all transactions and organizational relationships that impact the fiscal viability and health of the school.

**Hampden Charter School of Science East**

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| **Type of Charter**  (Commonwealth or Horace Mann) | Commonwealth | **Location** | Chicopee |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional | **Districts in Region**  (if applicable) | Springfield, Ludlow, Chicopee, West Springfield |
| **Year Opened** | 2009 | **Year(s) Renewed**  (if applicable) | 2014 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 560 | **Current Enrollment** | 508 (as of October 2018) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 6-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 6-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 399 (as of March 2018) | **Current Age of School** | 10 |
| **Mission Statement**  The mission of the HCSS is to provide a college preparatory-focused education to the youth of every race and ethnic group in Western Massachusetts in a safe, academically challenging, and caring educational environment. Our promise is to sustain small school size, provide extended math and science curriculum, individualized attention, college guidance, university outreach programs, and to encourage student-teacher-parent partnership. Our mission empowers our students with the support necessary to reach their highest intellectual, emotional, social and physical potentials building on the inherent promise to aid students’ preparation for college. | | | |

During its second charter term, HCSS East has demonstrated progress in student academic achievement. In 2018, HCSS East is classified as not requiring assistance or intervention, met 44 percent of its improvement targets, and is performing in the 74th percentile when compared to other “non-high schools” statewide.

Over the charter term, HCCS East administered PARCC in 2015 and 2016 and Next-Generation MCAS assessments in 2017 and 2018 in grades 6-8 and the legacy MCAS for science and technology/engineering in grade 8, and the legacy MCAS tests in grade 10. In 2018, 48 percent of HCCS East students in grades 6-8 met or exceeded expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS for ELA, below the state average of 51 percent. In mathematics, 50 percent of students met or exceeded expectations, above the statewide average of 48 percent. In science and technology/engineering, 34 percent of grade 8 students earned proficient or advanced, below the statewide average of 35 percent. In 2018, 99 percent of grade 10 students earned proficient or advanced in ELA, 100 percent earned proficient or advanced in mathematics. All MCAS results for grade 10 were above statewide averages.

The 4-year graduation rate for the 2017 cohort at HCCS East was 97.3 percent. The 5-year graduation rate was 97.1 percent for the 2016 cohort. In 2017, the school’s dropout rate was 0.0 percent, below the statewide average of 1.8 percent.

As demonstrated in the attached Summary of Review, the school implements its mission and key design elements with fidelity, is organizationally viable, and met a majority of the measures contained in its accountability plan. Hampden Charter School of Science East has disseminated its best practices to other public schools within its district and across the state. While the school has not been successful in recruiting and retaining a demographically comparable population, and attrition rates have been above those of comparison schools, the school has a newly approved Recruitment and Retention plan outlining strategies to improve in these areas.

Given all of the evidence, presented in more detail in the attached Summary of Review, I intend to renew the charter of HCCS East.

**KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School**

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| **Type of Charter**  (Commonwealth or Horace Mann) | Commonwealth | **Location** | Lynn |
| **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** | 1,586 | **Current Enrollment** | 1,456 (as of October 2018) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | K-12 | **Current Grade Span** | K-3, 5-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 1,885 (as of March 2018) | **Current Age of School** | 15 |
| **Mission Statement**  The mission of KIPP Academy Lynn Charter Public School (KALCS) is to empower all of its students with the academic skills, intellectual habits and character traits necessary to maximize their potential in high school, college, and the world beyond. | | | |

During its third charter term, KALCS has demonstrated progress in student academic achievement. In 2018, KALCS is classified as not requiring assistance or intervention, met 29 percent of its improvement targets, and is performing in the 42nd percentile when compared to other middle/high schools statewide.

Over the charter term, KALCS administered PARCC in 2015 and 2016 and Next-Generation MCAS assessments in 2017 and 2018 in grades 5-8, the legacy MCAS for science and technology/engineering in grades 5 and 8, and the legacy MCAS tests in grade 10. In 2018, 41 percent of KALCS students in grades 5-8 met or exceeded expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS for ELA, below the statewide average of 51 percent, but above that of the sending district. In mathematics, 44 percent of students met or exceed expectations, below the statewide average of 48 percent, but above that of the sending district. In science and technology/engineering, 39 percent of grade 5 students and 12 percent of grade 8 students earned proficient or advanced, below the statewide averages of 47 and 35 percent, respectively. In 2018, 91 percent of grade 10 students at KALCS earned proficient or advanced in ELA and 84 percent earned proficient or advanced in mathematics. All grade 10 MCAS results were equal to or above statewide averages.

KIPP Academy Lynn Charter Public School’s 4-year graduation rate for the 2017 cohort was 87.5 percent, with 10.4 percent of the cohort still in school. KIPP Academy Lynn Charter Public School’s 5-year graduation rate was 92.2 percent for the 2016 cohort with 3.9 percent still in school. In 2017, the school’s dropout rate was 0.4 percent, below the statewide average of 1.8 percent.

As demonstrated in the attached Summary of Review, the school implements its mission and key design elements with fidelity and met a majority of the measures contained in its accountability plan. KIPP Academy Lynn Charter Public School has disseminated its best practices to other public schools within its district and across the state and is implementing a newly approved Recruitment and Retention. Based on discipline rates from the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years, KALCS has been identified as a participant in the Department’s Rethinking Discipline professional learning network and is working to reduce its use of suspension. The school has an approved action plan to reduce its rate of suspensions. While the school’s board of trustees provides governance and oversight of the school, there have been repeated instances of non-compliance in the school’s fiscal audits during the charter term and two findings in the most recent fiscal audit. The school has provided a plan to address these findings and the Department will monitor implementation of needed changes to fiscal policies and procedures.

Given all of the evidence, presented in more detail in the attached Summary of Review, I intend to renew the charter of KALCS.

**Roxbury Preparatory Charter 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** | 1999 | **Year(s) Renewed**  (if applicable) | 2004, 2009, 2014 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 1,800 | **Current Enrollment** | 1,518 (as of October 2018) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 5-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 5-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 557 (as of March 2018) | **Current Age of School** | 20 |
| **Mission Statement**  The mission of Roxbury Preparatory Charter School (Roxbury Prep) is to prepare students to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college. Roxbury Prep is founded on the philosophy that all students are entitled to and can succeed in college preparatory programs when: 1) the curriculum is rigorous, engaging, and well-planned; 2) the school emphasizes student character, community responsibility, and exposure to life’s possibilities; and 3) a community network supports student academic, social, and physical well-being. | | | |

During its fourth charter term, RPCS has demonstrated partial progress in student academic achievement. In 2018, RPCS is classified as not requiring assistance or intervention, met 29 percent of its improvement targets, and is performing in the 28th percentile when compared to other middle/high schools statewide.

Over the charter term, RPCS administered PARCC in 2015 and 2016 and Next-Generation MCAS assessments in 2017 and 2018 in grades 5-8, the legacy MCAS for science and technology/engineering in grades 5 and 8, and the legacy MCAS tests beginning in 2016 in grade 10. In 2018, 39 percent of RPCS students in grades 5-8 met or exceeded expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS for ELA, below the statewide average of 51 percent. In mathematics, 45 percent of students met or exceeded expectations, below the statewide average of 48 percent. In science and technology/engineering, 38 percent of grade 5 students and 9 percent of grade 8 students earned proficient or advanced, below the statewide averages of 47 and 35 percent, respectively. In 2018, 88 percent of grade 10 students at RPCS earned proficient or advanced in ELA and 73 percent earned proficient or advanced in mathematics. Grade 10 MCAS results were below statewide averages.

Roxbury Preparatory Charter School will graduate its first class this school year. In 2017, the school’s dropout rate was 2.1 percent, above the statewide average of 1.8 percent.

As demonstrated in the attached Summary of Review, the school implements its mission and key design elements with fidelity, met a majority of the measures contained in its accountability plan, and is organizationally viable. Roxbury Preparatory Charter School has disseminated its best practices to other public schools within its district and across the state. While RPCS has had higher rates of attrition than comparison schools during the past two school years, the school implements a recently approved Recruitment and Retention plan which seeks to remedy this issue.

Roxbury Preparatory Charter School continues to suspend students at rates among the highest across the state. Under the state law and regulations that took effect in 2014, the Department identifies schools that suspend or expel a significant percentage of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year and the schools and districts with significant disparities in suspension and expulsion rates among different racial and ethnic groups or for students with disabilities. In 2016, 2017, and 2018, RPCS was identified as one of the schools with disparate rates of suspensions for student subgroups. Roxbury Preparatory Charter School is a participant in the Department’s professional learning network and is taking steps to reduce its use of suspension. The school’s rates for out-of-school suspension have declined from 40 percent of all students suspended in 2015 to 21.1 percent in 2018. These rates, however, are still among the highest statewide (the statewide average for out-of-school suspensions was 2.9 percent of all students in 2018). The school’s suspension rates for particular subgroups are far greater than those for all students; in 2018, RPCS suspended 37.8 percent of students with disabilities, 29.1 percent of male students, 25.6 percent of economically disadvantaged students, and 25.1 percent of English learner students.

While I see an overall reduction in the school’s use of suspension since 2015, the rates remain far too high. Given all of the evidence, presented in more detail in the attached Summary of Review, I intend to renew the charter of RPCS with conditions.

1. By February 28, 2019, RPCS 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.
2. By April 30, 2019, RPCS must submit to the Department a comprehensive evaluation of the school’s climate, discipline policies, and school culture practices including, but not limited to, whether and how the school’s programs, policies, and procedures effectively create a safe and supportive environment and allow students equitable access the educational program. Such comprehensive evaluation must be conducted by an external consultant(s) acceptable to and approved in advance by the Department.
3. By May 30, 2019, RPCS must submit to the Department for approval an action plan to improve discipline rates. Such action plan must specify the strategies to improve school climate, discipline policies, and school culture practices for all student groups. The action plan must set clear and specific implementation benchmarks, with a clear timetable and deadlines for completion of key tasks, to allow the school's board of trustees and the Department to monitor implementation. RPCS must submit monthly progress reports on the action plan to the Department.
4. By December 31, 2021 the school must demonstrate continued significant and sustained improvement in lowering discipline rates.

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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: Summaries of Review for Boston Preparatory Charter Public School, Conservatory Lab Charter School, Hampden Charter School of Science East, KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School, and Roxbury Preparatory Charter School

Responses of Charter Schools to Summaries of Review, if applicable

Public Comment

1. The charter school regulations, at 603 CMR 1.11(2), provide as follows.

   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-1)
2. Please see pages 8-9 for additional details and evidence that supports the determination of renewal with conditions. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Please see pages 12-14 for additional details and evidence that supports the determination of renewal with conditions. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)