*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Jeffrey C. Riley*Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:**  | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner |
| **Date:**  | February 12, 2021 |
| **Subject:** | Charter Schools – Three Charters Renewed |

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 15, 2021, I notified the Board that I intended to renew the charters of three schools, without conditions: Alma del Mar Charter School; Learning First Charter Public School[[1]](#footnote-1); and Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School. 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 taken these actions. Summary information regarding all three schools is provided in this memorandum. All charters renewed run from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2026. These charters are renewed for the maximum enrollment, grades served, and district(s) served 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.

| **Alma del Mar Charter School**  |
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| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | New Bedford |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 2011 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2016, 2021 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 1,044 | **Current Enrollment** | 797 (October 2020) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | K-8 | **Current Grade Span** | K-8 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 512 (March 2020) | **Current Age of School** | 10 |
| **Mission Statement:** Alma del Mar is an inclusive, K-8 Expeditionary Learning school that puts New Bedford students on a college trajectory and challenges them to be service-oriented leaders. By engaging in a rigorous academic program with an emphasis on meaningful work, our students will master essential skills and content, take ownership of their learning and think boldly while addressing complex academic and community issues. |

| **Learning First Charter Public School**  |
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| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Worcester |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 1996 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 666 | **Current Enrollment** | 665 (October 2020) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | K-8 | **Current Grade Span** | K-8 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 280 (March 2020) | **Current Age of School** | 25 |
| **Mission Statement:** Learning First Charter Public School is committed to preparing a diverse cross section of Worcester children for success as students, workers, and citizens by providing them a high quality education at prevailing public school costs. |

| **Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School**  |
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| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | South Hadley |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional | **Districts in Region** | Agawam, Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Erving, Frontier, Gateway, Gill-Montague, Granby, Greenfield, Hadley, Hampden-Wilbraham, Hampshire, Hatfield, Holyoke, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Mohawk Trail, Monroe, Monson, Northampton, Palmer, Pioneer Valley, Ralph C. Mahar, Rowe, South Hadley, Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional, Springfield, Tantasqua, Ware, West Springfield, and Westfield. |
| **Year Opened** | 1996 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 400 | **Current Enrollment** | 391 (October 2020) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 7-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 7-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 270 (March 2020) | **Current Age of School** | 25 |
| **Mission Statement:** PVPA offers its students intensive exposure to the performing arts within the context of an excellent college preparatory curriculum. |

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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.

Attachment: Renewal of Charters – Notification of Intended Actions for Alma del Mar Charter School; Learning First Charter Public School; and Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School (January 15, 2021)

1. Until July 2020, Learning First Charter Public School was named Seven Hills Charter Public School. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)