*****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 11, 2021 |
| **Subject:** | Renewal of Charters – Notification of Intended Actions for Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School; Bridge Boston Charter School; Codman Academy Charter Public School; Innovation Academy Charter School; Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School; Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School of Excellence; New Heights Charter School of Brockton; Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School Chelsea; Prospect Hill Academy Charter School; and UP Academy Charter School of Boston |

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.”

Under this authority, I intend to renew the charters of ten schools, five unconditionally and five with conditions. The schools I intend to renew without conditions are Bridge Boston Charter School; Innovation Academy Charter School; Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School; Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School of Excellence; and New Heights Charter School of Brockton. I intend to renew with conditions the charters of Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School; Codman Academy Charter Public School; Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School Chelsea; Prospect Hill Academy Charter School; and UP Academy Charter School of Boston. These conditions are detailed later in this memorandum.

The superintendents of the districts sending students to these schools were invited to submit written comment regarding the charter renewals. The Department received written comment from Superintendent Brenda Cassellius of Boston Public Schools noting concerns about academic performance and discipline rates at UP Academy Charter School of Boston, a Horace Mann charter school.

Please let me know by **Thursday, February 18**, 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 indicated in Summaries of Review. 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 summarizes the evidence related to each school’s performance on a subset of the Criteria that are directly related to the statutory and regulatory requirements for renewal.[1](#_bookmark0) 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. The Department continues to gather evidence regarding all of the Criteria through ongoing monitoring.

The table on page 7 of this memorandum provides a dashboard with a summary of ratings for the ten schools whose charters I intend to renew. Beginning on page 8 of the memorandum, I provide a brief summary of the evidence on which I based my decisions. 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 of each school.

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.

**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 goals and measures. Charter schools report on the Accountability Plan annually and aim to meet the goals 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 from time to time 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 age of the school for 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. Schools currently seeking renewal of their charters have administered a number of different statewide assessments during the past charter term. The Department has reviewed each charter school’s academic performance on the legacy MCAS, PARCC, and Next Generation assessments in order to illustrate “progress made in student academic achievement” as required by the charter school statute at G.L. c. 71, § 89(dd). Likewise, during the past five years, as required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, Massachusetts created a new statewide accountability system which went into effect in September 2018.

In November 2015, the Board voted to approve the development of Massachusetts's Next Generation MCAS assessment. Starting in the spring of 2017, Massachusetts public schools administered the Next Generation MCAS assessment to grades 3 through 8. Starting in the spring of 2019, Massachusetts public schools also administered the Next Generation English language arts (ELA) and mathematics MCAS assessments to students in grade 10. In spring 2019, grade 10 students continued to take the legacy MCAS science assessment.

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 determinations made by the new statewide system of accountability. The data presented for charter school academic performance include each school’s historical data from statewide assessments administered in 2017, 2018, and 2019. Statewide assessments were not administered in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While cited as evidence of academic achievement in the memorandum below, charter schools are not required to meet or exceed statewide averages on statewide assessment in order to receive renewal of their charters. Rather, charter schools must demonstrate “progress made in student academic achievement” during the charter term. The Department also considers relative performance of districts from which charter schools draw students.

**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 ten schools that I intend to renew follows.

**Summary of Performance[[1]](#footnote-1) and Intended Commissioner Action**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Area of Charter School Accountability | Criterion | Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School | Bridge Boston Charter School | Codman Academy Charter Public School | Innovation Academy Charter School | Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School | Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School of Excellence | New Heights Charter School of Brockton | Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School Chelsea | Prospect Hill Academy Charter School | UP Academy Charter School of Boston |
| **Faithfulness to Charter** | Mission and Key Design Elements |  Meets |  Meets | **** Partially Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets | **** Partially Meets |  Meets | **** Partially Meets |
| Access and Equity |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets | **** Partially Meets | **** Partially Meets |  Meets | **** Partially Meets | **** Partially Meets |  Meets | **** Partially Meets |
| Dissemination |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |
| **Academic Program Success** | Student Performance | Not requiring assistance or intervention  85th percentile | Not requiring assistance or intervention  22nd percentile | Requiring assistance or intervention  8th percentile | Not requiring assistance or intervention  76th percentile | Requiring assistance or intervention | Not requiring assistance or intervention  49th percentile | Requiring assistance or intervention  12th percentile | Insufficient Data | Not requiring assistance or intervention  46th percentile | Requiring assistance or intervention  9th percentile |
| **Organizational Viability** | Governance | **** Partially Meets |  Meets |  Meets | **** Partially Meets | **** Partially Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |

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| **Intended Commissioner Action** | Renew with a Condition | Unconditional Renewal | Renew with a Condition | Unconditional Renewal | Unconditional Renewal | Unconditional Renewal | Unconditional Renewal | Renew with Conditions | Renew with a Condition | Renew with Conditions |

**Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School**

| Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Cambridge |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 1996 | **Years Renewed** | 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 350 | **Current Enrollment** | 344 (October 2020) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | PK-6 | **Current Grade Span** | PK-6 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 420 (March 2020) | **Current Age of School** | 25 |
| **Mission Statement:**  The Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School a K1 through grade 6 Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) school serving all students. The school is founded on the belief that all students are able to develop academic mastery, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, culture, native language, gender or sexual orientation. The staff of caring, dedicated, and highly qualified professionals integrate language and fine arts into the standard-based STEM curricula and uses authentic data to monitor every student’s growth and achievement. | | | |

During its fifth charter term, Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School (BBCPS) has demonstrated progress in student achievement.[[2]](#footnote-2) In 2019, BBCPS was classified as not requiring assistance or intervention.[[3]](#footnote-3) According to the statewide accountability system, the school met or exceeded targets and is in the 85th percentile when compared to other schools administering similar assessments. The table below summarizes academic performance data for the school for 2019 and includes statewide data for comparison purposes. Student achievement was higher for the school than for the state as a whole on all assessments.

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| **Summary of Academic Performance for BBCPS (2019)** | | |
| **Grade and Subject** | **School** | **State** |
| **Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (Next Generation MCAS)** | |
| **Grades 3-8 English Language Arts** | 73 | 52 |
| **Grades 3-8 Mathematics** | 69 | 49 |
| **Grade 5 Science** | 68 | 49 |

During the charter term, the school has been faithful to the terms of its charter. The school is faithful to its mission and implements its key design elements. The school met a majority of the goals contained in its Accountability Plan; implemented an approved Recruitment and Retention Plan; and disseminated its best practices to other public schools in its district and across the state.

During the latter part of the charter term, the extent to which members of the BBCPS board of trustees have provided competent and appropriate oversight of the school decreased. There were two transitions in board leadership during the charter term, and the board has recently demonstrated limited oversight of the school leader and the school’s finances. The board has also demonstrated somewhat limited oversight of the school’s efforts to be faithful to the mission and progress toward meeting academic goals. Department staff plan to work with the school to ensure that the school’s board of trustees addresses these areas of concern.

Additionally, for the past five years, BBCPS has enrolled more than 20 percent of its total population from outside of Cambridge. The charter school statute, G.L. c. 71, § 89(n), requires a school enrolling more than 20 percent of its total enrollment for two consecutive years from school districts not included in its charter to request an amendment to its charter to reflect its actual enrollment pattern; for schools chartered before January 1, 2011, such as BBCPS, the Board or the Commissioner establishes a timeline of not less than 5 years for the school to comply with this requirement. During the current term, BBCPS has increased the percentage of students enrolled from Cambridge; a majority of incoming pre-kindergarten students are siblings or Cambridge residents. The school has stated that many students who enroll in pre-kindergarten as Cambridge residents then move to another municipality in later grades for many reasons, including finding more affordable housing.

Given all of the evidence, I intend to renew the charter of BBCPS with the condition that follows.

**Condition:** By December 31, 2024, BBCPS must enroll no more than 20 percent of its total student population from outside Cambridge or demonstrate sufficient demand within the school’s charter region to meet enrollment targets. To meet this goal, BBCPS must limit the admission of non-sibling students who live outside of Cambridge. Alternatively, BBCPS may submit a charter amendment request no later than August 1, 2025 to amend the school’s charter region to reflect the school’s actual enrollment pattern.

**Bridge Boston Charter School**

| Bridge Boston Charter School | | | |
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| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Boston |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 2011 | **Years Renewed** | 2016 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 335 | **Current Enrollment** | 338[[4]](#footnote-4) (October 2020) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | PK-8 | **Current Grade Span** | PK-8 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 2,080 (March 2020) | **Current Age of School** | 10 |
| **Mission Statement:**  Bridge Boston Charter School students thrive in a challenging, joyful, inclusive K1-8 public school community that values close partnerships with families and a focus on the whole child. Our students will develop the skills necessary to excel academically in rigorous high schools, reach their individual potentials, and view themselves as creators of their own futures. Through full-service programming, Bridge Boston Charter School works to remove the health and social obstacles that hinder student learning. | | | |

During its second charter term, Bridge Boston Charter School (BBCS) has demonstrated progress in student achievement. In 2019, BBCS was classified as not requiring assistance or intervention. According to the statewide accountability system, the school made substantial progress toward targets and is in the 22nd percentile when compared to other schools administering similar assessments. The table below summarizes the academic performance data for the school for 2019 and includes district and statewide data for comparison purposes. Student achievement was lower for the school than for the state as a whole on all assessments. In relation to the achievement of students in the district of Boston, where the school is located, student achievement at the school was higher in English language arts (ELA) and science and lower in mathematics. The school has taken steps to improve student performance in mathematics, including adopting a standard mathematics curriculum and hiring additional staff to support mathematics instruction. The student growth percentile in mathematics increased in 2019.

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| **Summary of Academic Performance for BBCS (2019)** | | | |
| **Grade and Subject** | **School** | **Boston** | **State** |
| **Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (Next Generation MCAS)** | | |
| **Grades 3-8 English Language Arts** | 41 | 35 | 52 |
| **Grades 3-8 Mathematics** | 27 | 33 | 49 |
| **Grade 5 Science** | 30 | 24 | 49 |

During the charter term, the school has been generally faithful to the terms of its charter. The school is mostly faithful to its mission and implements its key design elements. The school met a majority of the goals in its Accountability Plan, implemented an approved Recruitment and Retention Plan, and disseminated its best practices to other public schools in its district and across the state.

Throughout the charter term, members of the BBCS board of trustees have been active and engaged in their roles as public agents, providing competent and appropriate governance and oversight of the school.

Given all of the evidence, I intend to renew the charter of BBCS.

**Codman Academy Charter Public School**

| Codman Academy Charter Public School | | | |
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| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Boston |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 2001 | **Years Renewed** | 2006, 2011, 2016 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 345 | **Current Enrollment** | 348[[5]](#footnote-5) (October 2020) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | PK-12 | **Current Grade Span** | PK-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 2,543 (March 2020) | **Current Age of School** | 20 |
| **Mission Statement:**  Our mission is to provide an outstanding, transformative education to prepare students for success in college, further education and beyond. | | | |

During its fourth charter term, Codman Academy Charter Public School (CACPS) has demonstrated limited progress in student achievement. In 2016, the school’s charter was renewed with conditions related to academic performance. In 2018, I extended the condition due to continued concerns about academic performance. In 2020, based on data from 2018 and 2019, I again extended the condition due to lack of evidence of significant and sustained academic improvement. According to the statewide accountability system, the school made moderate progress toward targets in 2019. The school’s accountability percentile was 8 in both 2018 and 2019. The academic performance of students in grades 3 through 8 improved somewhat from 2017 to 2019. The academic performance of students in grade 10 stayed about the same in ELA and mathematics in 2018 and declined in science. In 2019, the academic performance of students in grade 10 was lower for the school than for the state as a whole in ELA, mathematics, and science. Statewide assessments were not administered in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which means that since the condition was last extended, there are no additional data from statewide assessments to demonstrate academic improvement. The four-year graduation rate for the school (87.2 percent) was slightly lower than for the state as a whole (88 percent) for the 2019 cohort, and the dropout rate (0 percent) was lower for the school than for the state as a whole (1.8 percent).

The school has been generally faithful to the terms of its charter. The school achieved partial success in accomplishing the school’s mission and achieving all of the school’s key design elements due to limited progress in academic achievement. The school met a majority of the goals in its Accountability Plan, implemented an approved Recruitment and Retention Plan, and disseminated its best practices to other public schools in its district and across the state.

Throughout the charter term, members of the CACPS board of trustees have been active and engaged in their roles as public agents, providing competent and appropriate governance and oversight of the school.

Given all of the evidence, I intend to renew the charter of CACPS with the condition that follows.

**Condition:** By December 31, 2023, the school must demonstrate that it is an academic success by providing evidence that the school has exhibited significant and sustained academic improvement in mathematics, English language arts, and science.

**Innovation Academy Charter School**

| Innovation Academy Charter School | | | |
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| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Tyngsborough |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional | **Districts in Region** | Tyngsborough, Chelmsford, Lowell, Billerica, Dracut, Tewksbury, Groton-Dunstable, Littleton, Westford |
| **Year Opened** | 1996 | **Years Renewed** | 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 800 | **Current Enrollment** | 790 (October 2020) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 5-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 5-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 346 (March 2020) | **Current Age of School** | 25 |
| **Mission Statement:**  The mission of the Innovation Academy Charter School is provide students with a challenging, interdisciplinary education that will prepare them for the 21st century through an emphasis on holistic learning, higher order and critical thinking skills, and practical application and integration of curriculum areas. | | | |

During its fifth charter term, Innovation Academy Charter School (IACS) has demonstrated progress in student achievement. In 2019, IACS was classified as not requiring assistance or intervention. According to the statewide accountability system, the school made substantial progress toward targets and is in the 76th percentile when compared to other schools administering similar assessments. The table below summarizes academic performance data for the school for 2019 and includes statewide data for comparison purposes. Student achievement was higher for the school than for the state as a whole on all assessments. The four-year graduation rate for the school is higher than for the state as a whole, and the dropout rate is lower for the school than for the state as a whole.

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| **Summary of Academic Performance for IACS (2019)** | | |
| **Grade and Subject** | **School** | **State** |
| **Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (Next Generation MCAS)** | |
| **Grades 3-8 English Language Arts** | 57 | 52 |
| **Grades 3-8 Mathematics** | 58 | 49 |
| **Grades 5 & 8 Science** | 49 | 48 |
| **Grade 10 English Language Arts** | 52 | 61 |
| **Grade 10 Mathematics** | 73 | 59 |
|  | **Percent of Students Proficient or Higher (MCAS)** | |
| **Grade 10 Science and Technology/Engineering** | 92 | 74 |
| **4-Year Graduation Rate** | 94.6 | 88.0 |
| **Dropout Rate** | 0.5 | 1.8 |

During the charter term, the school has been generally faithful to the terms of its charter. The school is faithful to its mission and implements its key design elements. In 2018-19, IACS met a majority of the measures in its Accountability Plan. IACS did not meet a majority of the measures in its Accountability Plan in 2019-20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The school implemented an approved Recruitment and Retention Plan and has disseminated its best practices to other public schools in its region, across the state, and outside the state.

Student attrition is an area of moderate concern. During the charter term, there were multiple years when the rate of attrition for all students was above the third quartile in relation to comparison schools; this appears to be largely due to the school’s grade configuration and location. IACS is the only public school of choice in the area for students leaving elementary school. Most attrition takes place after grade 8. According to the school, students leave to attend vocational high schools in the area.

Throughout the charter term, members of the IACS board have been active and involved in their roles as public agents. Board members have fulfilled most of their legal responsibilities and obligations and have generally provided appropriate governance and oversight of the school’s administration. The board, however, has provided limited oversight of the school’s progress toward meeting academic goals and somewhat limited oversight of the school’s finances. In a response to the Summary of Review, the school leader and chair and vice chair of the school’s board reported that the board plans to address these areas of concern this spring by revising the board’s committee structure and practices.

Given all of the evidence, I intend to renew the charter of IACS.

**Martha’s Vineyard Public Charter School**

| Martha’s Vineyard Public Charter School | | | |
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| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | West Tisbury |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional | **Districts in Region** | Up Island Regional  (Chilmark, Aquinnah,  West Tisbury), Tisbury,  Oak Bluffs, Edgartown,  Martha’s Vineyard |
| **Year Opened** | 1996 | **Years Renewed** | 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 180 | **Current Enrollment** | 176 (October 2020) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | K-12 | **Current Grade Span** | K-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 20 (March 2020) | **Current Age of School** | 25 |
| **Mission Statement:**  It is the mission of the Martha’s Vineyard Public Charter School to create a public school that will cultivate lifelong learners in a multi-aged, project-based setting. Within an environment that models interdependence as the foundation of society, the individual students will learn to direct his/her own learning. The group will make decisions together and recognize the unique contributions of each member. The community will support and interact with the school body. | | | |

During its fifth charter term, Martha’s Vineyard Public Charter School (MVPCS) has demonstrated progress in student achievement. In 2018 and 2019, the school was classified as requiring assistance or intervention because the school had low assessment participation, which is defined as below 95 percent. According to the school leader, there is a group of parents who are vocal in their opposition to MCAS. In 2019, 98 percent of students were assessed in ELA and 96 percent in mathematics; only 93 percent of students were assessed in science and 93 percent of students who are economically disadvantaged were assessed, below the 95 percent threshold. The table below summarizes academic performance data for the school for 2019 and includes statewide data for comparison purposes. Student achievement in grades 3 through 8 was higher for the school than for the state as a whole in ELA. In mathematics, student achievement in grades 3 through 8 was lower than for the state as a whole. Student growth percentiles in mathematics increased during the charter term for students in grades 3 through 8 and were in the range associated with typical growth in 2018 and 2019. In science, student achievement in grades 5 and 8 was slightly lower for the school than for the state as a whole. Achievement data is not available for students who took the grade 10 assessments because the school enrolls few students in the high school grades, and groups with fewer than 10 students are not assigned percentiles. The four-year graduation rate for the school is lower than for the state as a whole, and the dropout rate is higher for the school than for the state as a whole.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Summary of Academic Performance for MVPCS (2019)** | | |
| **Grade and Subject** | **School** | **State** |
| **Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (Next Generation MCAS)** | |
| **Grades 3-8 English Language Arts** | 63 | 52 |
| **Grades 3-8 Mathematics** | 41 | 49 |
| **Grades 5 & 8 Science** | 47 | 48 |
| **Grade 10 English Language Arts** | - | 61 |
| **Grade 10 Mathematics** | - | 59 |
|  | **Percent of Students Proficient or Higher (MCAS)** | |
| **Grade 10 Science and Technology/Engineering** | - | 74 |
| **4-Year Graduation Rate** | 77.8 | 88.0 |
| **Dropout Rate** | 3.2 | 1.8 |

During the charter term, the school has been faithful to the terms of its charter. The school is faithful to its mission and implements its key design elements. In 2018-19, the school met a majority of the goals in its Accountability Plan. The school did not meet a majority of the goals in its Accountability Plan in 2019-20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The school implemented an approved Recruitment and Retention Plan and disseminated its best practices to other public schools in its region.

Student attrition is an area of moderate concern. During the charter term, the rate of attrition was consistently above the third quartile in relation to comparison schools. Most attrition takes place after grade 8. According to the school, most students leave to attend Martha’s Vineyard Regional High School. The school plans to begin implementing the International Baccalaureate Diploma and Career-related Programmes for grades 11 and 12 in September 2021, which the school believes will strengthen the high school program.

Throughout the charter term, members of the MVPCS board have been active and involved in their roles as public agents. Board members have fulfilled most of their legal responsibilities and obligations and have generally provided appropriate governance and oversight of the school’s administration; the board, however, has provided somewhat limited oversight of the school’s progress toward meeting academic goals and has not developed a formal succession plan for board and school leadership. During the renewal inspection, board members reported that they have plans to take up succession planning at the board’s next annual retreat in the summer of 2021. Department staff plan to work with the school to ensure that the school’s board of trustees addresses these areas of concern.

Given all of the evidence, I intend to renew the charter of MVPCS.

**Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School of Excellence**

| Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School of Excellence | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Springfield |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 2006 | **Years Renewed** | 2011, 2016 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 360 | **Current Enrollment** | 365[[6]](#footnote-6) (October 2020) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | K-5 | **Current Grade Span** | K-5 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 162 (March 2020) | **Current Age of School** | 15 |
| **Mission Statement:**   |  | | --- | | Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence prepares kindergarten through 5th grade students of Springfield for academic success and engaged citizenship through insistence on rigorous, challenging work. The school incorporates Dr. King’s commitment to the highest standards in scholarship, civic participation, and the ideal of the beloved community. | | | | |

During its third charter term, Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School of Excellence (MLK) has demonstrated progress in student achievement. In 2019, MLK was classified as not requiring assistance or intervention. According to the statewide accountability system, the school made substantial progress toward targets and is in the 49th percentile when compared to other schools administering similar assessments. The table below summarizes the academic performance data for the school for 2019 and includes district and statewide data for comparison purposes. Student achievement was lower for the school than for the state as a whole in ELA and mathematics, but higher in science. In relation to the achievement of students in the district of Springfield, where the school is located, student achievement at the school was higher in ELA, mathematics, and science.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Summary of Academic Performance for MLK (2019)** | | | |
| **Grade and Subject** | **School** | **Springfield** | **State** |
| **Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (Next Generation MCAS)** | | |
| **Grades 3-8 English Language Arts** | 37 | 30 | 52 |
| **Grades 3-8 Mathematics** | 43 | 25 | 49 |
| **Grade 5 Science** | 51 | 29 | 49 |

During the charter term, the school has been faithful to the terms of its charter. The school is faithful to its mission and implements its key design elements. The school met all of the goals in its Accountability Plan, implemented an approved Recruitment and Retention Plan, and disseminated its best practices to other public schools in its district and across the state.

Throughout the charter term, members of the MLK board of trustees have been active and engaged in their roles as public agents, providing generally competent and appropriate governance and oversight of the school.

Given all of the evidence, I intend to renew the charter of MLK.

**New Heights Charter School of Brockton**

| New Heights Charter School of Brockton | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Brockton |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional | **Districts in Region** | Brockton, Randolph, Taunton |
| **Year Opened** | 2016 | **Years Renewed** | N/A |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 735 | **Current Enrollment** | 742[[7]](#footnote-7) (October 2020) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 6-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 6-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 104 (March 2020) | **Current Age of School** | 5 |
| **Mission Statement:**  Our mission is to prepare our students for college. Period. | | | |

During its first charter term, New Heights Charter School of Brockton (NHCSB) has demonstrated progress in student achievement. In 2019, NHCSB was classified as requiring assistance or intervention because the participation rate was low for English learners and former English learners. According to the statewide accountability system, the school made substantial progress toward targets and is in the 12th percentile when compared to other schools administering similar assessments. The table below summarizes academic performance data for the school for 2019 and includes district and statewide data for comparison purposes. Student achievement was lower for the school than for the state as a whole on all assessments; in relation to the performance of students in the district of Brockton, where the school is located, student achievement at the school was about the same in the lower grades but higher in grade 10 on all assessments. The four-year graduation rate is not included because the first cohort of students will graduate in 2021. The dropout rate is lower for the school than it is for Brockton and for the state as a whole.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Summary of Academic Performance for NHCSB (2019)** | | | |
| **Grade and Subject** | **School** | **Brockton** | **State** |
| **Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (Next Generation MCAS)** | | |
| **Grades 3-8 English Language Arts** | 26 | 27 | 52 |
| **Grades 3-8 Mathematics** | 24 | 22 | 49 |
| **Grade 8 Science** | 20 | 20 | 46 |
| **Grade 10 English Language Arts** | 44 | 34 | 61 |
| **Grade 10 Mathematics** | 41 | 26 | 59 |
|  | **Percent of Students Proficient or Higher (MCAS)** | | |
| **Grade 10 Science and Technology/Engineering** | 55 | 48 | 74 |
| **Dropout Rate** | 0.5 | 3.9 | 1.8 |

During the charter term, the school has been generally faithful to the terms of its charter. The school is mostly faithful to its mission and implements its key design elements. The school did not meet a majority of the goals in its Accountability Plan. The school set ambitious goals and fell somewhat short of reaching several of them. The school implemented an approved Recruitment and Retention Plan and disseminated its best practices to other public schools in its region and across the state.

Student attrition is an area of moderate concern. During the charter term, the rate of attrition was consistently above the third quartile in relation to comparison schools. Attrition is highest after grade 8. According to the school, students leave to pursue other options for high school. The school reported that over half of the students who left in 2020 after grade 8 left for Southeastern Vocational School.

Throughout the charter term, members of the NHCSB board have developed in their roles as public agents. During the past year, board members have strengthened the systems and structures that enable to the board to provide competent and appropriate governance and oversight of the school.

Given all of the evidence, I intend to renew the charter of NHCSB.

**Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School Chelsea**

| Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School Chelsea | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Chelsea |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional | **Districts in Region** | Chelsea, Everett, Lynn, Revere |
| **Year Opened** | 2006 | **Years Renewed** | 2011, 2016 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 225 | **Current Enrollment** | 221 (October 2020) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 9-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 9-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 122 (March 2020) | **Current Age of School** | 15 |
| **Mission Statement:**  Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School Chelsea challenges resilient, disconnected students with rigorous academics and relentless supports, so they take ownership of their futures and succeed in high school, college, and as self-sufficient adults. | | | |

Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School, Chelsea (Phoenix Chelsea) is an alternative high school that serves an at-risk population. During its third charter term, Phoenix Chelsea has demonstrated some progress in student achievement. Due to the small number of students in grade 10 who took the statewide assessments each year, Phoenix Chelsea had insufficient data for a level determination or classification. In 2019, 20 percent of Phoenix Chelsea students who took the Next Generation MCAS met or exceeded expectations in ELA and 67 percent of students partially met expectations. Thirty-three percent of Phoenix Chelsea students met or exceeded expectations in mathematics and 67 percent partially met expectations. Fifty-four percent of Phoenix Chelsea students who took the legacy MCAS in Science and Technology/Engineering earned proficient or higher and 46 percent earned needs improvement. In 2018, 100 percent of Phoenix Chelsea students who took the legacy MCAS in ELA and mathematics score proficient or higher. There was insufficient data during the charter term to calculate student growth percentiles.

While the Department uses any statewide assessment data available to assess the academic performance of alternative charter schools, the Department also requires alternative charter schools to submit evidence of academic success from non-statewide assessments. At a minimum, alternative charter schools must develop five-year academic goals for non-statewide assessments in their Accountability Plans that will allow them to illustrate a track record of academic success during the charter term. In its Accountability Plan for the charter term, Phoenix Chelsea established four five-year goals to be measured using non-statewide assessments. The school used Star Reading and Star Math assessments to measure growth among Category I students.[[8]](#footnote-8) The school did not administer the assessments in 2019-20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2018-19, the school administered the Star Math assessment but did not administer the Star Reading assessment. The school met each of the four goals at least once during the years when the assessments were administered; as with statewide assessments, however, the small number and percentage of students assessed is insufficient to show a track record of academic success during the charter term.

Both four- and five-year graduation rates are lower for the school than for alternative schools statewide. The dropout rate for the school is higher than the dropout rate for alternative schools statewide. Comparison data for the state is also included below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Summary of Academic Performance for Phoenix Chelsea (2019)** | | | |
|  | **School** | **Alternative Schools Statewide** | **State** |
| **4-Year Graduation Rate** | 5.4 | 40.4 | 88.0 |
| **5-Year Graduation Rate (2018)** | 16.8 | 43.9 | 89.7 |
| **Dropout Rate** | 26.9 | 22.1 | 1.8 |

During the charter term, the school has generally been faithful to the terms of its charter. The school achieved partial success in accomplishing the school’s mission and implementing the school’s key design elements. The school actively recruits and enrolls disconnected students, offers a program that is designed to prepare students for college, and provides many supports; there was mixed evidence of academic rigor, however, and graduation rates were low and declined during the charter term. The school met a majority of the measures in its Accountability Plan, implemented an approved Recruitment and Retention Plan, and has disseminated its best practices to other public schools in its district and across the state.

The percentage of students assigned to out-of-school suspension is an area of moderate concern. During the charter term, the percentage of students assigned to out-of-school suspension rose each year to a high of 16.8 percent in 2019 before falling in 2020 to 8.9 percent. At alternative schools statewide, 13.4 percent of students were assigned to out-of-school suspension in 2019, the most recent year for which that figure is available. In 2020, the school began participating in the Department’s [Rethinking Discipline Professional Learning Network](https://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=21719) (RD PLN). The RD PLN works to reduce the inappropriate or excessive use of long-term suspensions and expulsions, including disproportional rates of suspensions for students with disabilities and students of color. The school has implemented a variety of measures to reduce discipline rates, such as strengthening the school’s approach to restorative justice and aligning policies to positive youth development.

Throughout the charter term, members of the Phoenix Chelsea board of trustees have been active and engaged in their roles as public agents, providing generally competent and appropriate governance and oversight of the school.

Additionally, for the past five years, Phoenix Chelsea has enrolled more than 20 percent of its total population from outside of its region. The charter school statute, G.L. c. 71, § 89(n), requires a school enrolling more than 20 percent of its total enrollment for two consecutive years from school districts not included in its charter to request an amendment to its charter to reflect its actual enrollment pattern; for schools chartered before January 1, 2011, such as Phoenix Chelsea, the Board or the Commissioner establishes a timeline of not less than 5 years for the school to comply with this requirement.

Given all of the evidence, I intend to renew the charter of Phoenix Chelsea with the conditions that follow.

**Condition 1:** By August 1, 2021, Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School, Chelsea must develop five-year goals for non-statewide assessments in its Accountability Plan that will allow the school to demonstrate a track record of academic success during the charter term.

**Condition 2:** Beginning August 1, 2021, Phoenix Academy Public Charter High School, Chelsea will submit for annual Department approval an enhanced recruitment and retention plan that includes deliberate and specific recruitment strategies for residents of the school’s charter region that would serve to support enrollment levels from within the school’s charter region and to reduce enrollment from outside of its charter region to no more than 20 percent of the school’s total population in future charter terms. Alternatively, the school may submit a charter amendment request to amend the school’s charter region to reflect the school’s actual enrollment pattern.

**Prospect Hill Academy Charter School**

| Prospect Hill Academy Charter School | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Cambridge and Somerville |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional | **Districts in Region** | Cambridge and Somerville |
| **Year Opened** | 1996 | **Years Renewed** | 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 1,200 | **Current Enrollment** | 1,107 (October 2020) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | PK-12 | **Current Grade Span** | K-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 76 (March 2020) | **Current Age of School** | 25 |
| **Mission Statement:**  Prospect Hill Academy Charter School will prepare each student for success in college, inspire a lifelong love of learning, and foster responsible citizenship. | | | |

During its fifth charter term, Prospect Hill Academy (PHA) has demonstrated progress in student achievement. In 2019, PHA was classified as not requiring assistance or intervention. According to the statewide accountability system, the school made substantial progress toward targets and is in the 46th percentile when compared to other schools administering similar assessments. The table below summarizes academic performance data for the school for 2019 and includes statewide data for comparison purposes. Student achievement was somewhat lower for the school than for the state as a whole on most assessments. Importantly, however, the percentage of students meeting expectations on the Next Generation MCAS increased from 2017 to 2019 in both ELA and mathematics, and student growth percentiles in 2017 through 2019 were mostly in the range associated with typical growth. The four-year graduation rate for the school is higher than for the state as a whole, and the dropout rate is lower for the school than for the state as a whole.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Summary of Academic Performance for PHA (2019)** | | |
| **Grade and Subject** | **School** | **State** |
| **Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (Next Generation MCAS)** | |
| **Grades 3-8 English Language Arts** | 46 | 52 |
| **Grades 3-8 Mathematics** | 39 | 49 |
| **Grades 5 & 8 Science** | 26 | 48 |
| **Grade 10 English Language Arts** | 55 | 61 |
| **Grade 10 Mathematics** | 56 | 59 |
|  | **Percent of Students Proficient or Higher (MCAS)** | |
| **Grade 10 Science and Technology/Engineering** | 78 | 74 |
| **4-Year Graduation Rate** | 95.7 | 88.0 |
| **Dropout Rate** | 0.6 | 1.8 |

During the charter term, the school has been faithful to the terms of its charter. The school is faithful to its mission and implements its key design elements. The school met a majority of the goals in its Accountability Plan, implemented an approved Recruitment and Retention Plan, and disseminated its best practices to other public schools in its district, across the state, and outside the state.

Throughout the charter term, members of the PHA board of trustees have been active and engaged in their roles as public agents, providing competent and appropriate governance and oversight of the school.

Additionally, for the past five years, PHA has enrolled more than 20 percent of its total population from outside of its region. The charter school statute, G.L. c. 71, § 89(n), requires a school enrolling more than 20 percent of its total enrollment for two consecutive years from school districts not included in its charter to request an amendment to its charter to reflect its actual enrollment pattern; for schools chartered before January 1, 2011, such as PHA, the Board or the Commissioner establishes a timeline of not less than 5 years for the school to comply with this requirement. PHA submitted such an amendment in tandem with its submission of an application for charter school renewal. As noted in a memorandum included in the regular February Board mailing, I am not recommending PHA’s amendment request. I encourage the school to work proactively with Department staff to articulate an amendment request as specified by the condition below.

Given all of the evidence, I intend to renew the charter of PHA with the condition that follows.

**Condition:** By August 1, 2025, PHA will submit a revised request for an amendment to the school’s charter region that aligns with enrollment demand and would serve to reduce enrollment from outside of its charter region to no more than 20 percent of the school’s total population in future charter terms. The amendment request shall take into consideration all districts from which the school draws students, including those districts where limited seats are available and a proven provider determination is required.

**UP Academy Charter School of Boston**

| UP Academy Charter School of Boston | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Charter** | Horace Mann III | **Location** | Boston |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 2011 | **Years Renewed** | 2016 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 540 | **Current Enrollment** | 349 (October 2020) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 6-8 | **Current Grade Span** | 6-8 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 0 (March 2020) | **Current Age of School** | 10 |
| **Mission Statement:**  UP Academy will ensure that its students acquire the knowledge, skills, and strength of character necessary to succeed on the path to college and to achieve their full potential. | | | |

During its third charter term, UP Academy Charter School of Boston (UP Boston), a Horace Mann charter school, has demonstrated limited progress in student achievement. In 2019, UP Boston was classified as requiring assistance or intervention because the school is in the lowest performing 10 percent of schools. According to the statewide accountability system, the school made moderate progress toward targets and is in the 9th percentile when compared to other schools administering similar assessments. The table below summarizes the academic performance data for the school for 2019 and includes district and statewide data for comparison purposes. Student achievement was lower for the school than for the state as a whole on all assessments. In relation to the achievement of students in the district of Boston, where the school is located, student achievement at UP Boston was also lower on all assessments. While student growth percentiles in 2017 through 2019 were consistently in the range associated with typical growth, the percentage of students meeting expectations on the Next Generation MCAS did not increase from 2017 to 2019.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Summary of Academic Performance for UP Boston (2019)** | | | |
| **Grade and Subject** | **School** | **Boston** | **State** |
| **Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (Next Generation MCAS)** | | |
| **Grades 3-8 English Language Arts** | 29 | 35 | 52 |
| **Grades 3-8 Mathematics** | 32 | 33 | 49 |
| **Grade 8 Science** | 11 | 24 | 46 |

During the charter term, the school has been somewhat faithful to the terms of its charter. The school achieved partial success in accomplishing the school’s mission and implementing the school’s key design elements. The school’s program includes elements designed to provide a strong academic foundation and to develop character; the school’s academic performance data, however, suggests that the school has achieved limited success providing students with the academic skills needed for future success. The school did not meet a majority of the measures in its Accountability Plan during the charter term. The school implemented an approved Recruitment and Retention Plan and has disseminated its best practices to other public schools in its district and across the state.

Student attrition is an area of moderate concern. After the 2019-20 school year, the rate of attrition was 23.8 percent, above the third quartile in relation to comparison schools. Enrollment declined in each of the past two years, from 521 in 2018-19 to 421 in 2019-20 to 349 in 2020-21. According to the school, transitions in school leadership and changes to the discipline system are responsible for high rates of attrition.

The percentage of students assigned to out-of-school suspension is an area of moderate concern.[[9]](#footnote-9) During the charter term, the percentage of students assigned to out-of-school suspension declined each year, from a high of 22.2 percent in 2017 to 8.2 percent in 2020. The school was identified to participate in the Department’s [Rethinking Discipline Professional Learning Network](https://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=21719) (RD PLN) in 2016-17 but has not been identified in the past three years. The RD PLN works to reduce the inappropriate or excessive use of long-term suspensions and expulsions, including disproportional rates of suspensions for students with disabilities and students of color. The school has implemented a variety of measures to reduce discipline rates, including revising its culture management system and providing ongoing professional development to staff to implement the system.

Throughout the charter term, members of the UP Boston board of trustees have been active and engaged in their roles as public agents, providing generally competent and appropriate governance and oversight of the school.

Given all of the evidence, I intend to renew the charter of UP Boston with the conditions that follow.

**Condition 1:** By December 31, 2023, the school must demonstrate that it is an academic success by providing evidence that the school has exhibited significant and sustained academic improvement in mathematics, English language arts, and science.

**Condition 2:** By July 31, 2021, the school must conduct a comprehensive review of the school’s program and submit an action plan to the Department that addresses areas in need of improvement as outlined in the Summary of Review.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

If you have any questions regarding my intended actions, require additional information, or would like a copy of any Summaries of Review, please contact Alison Bagg, Director (781-338-3218); Cliff Chuang, Senior Associate Commissioner (781-338-3222); or me.

1. Rating Key:

   **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. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Department has reviewed each charter school’s academic performance on the legacy MCAS and Next Generation assessments in order to illustrate “progress made in student academic achievement” as required by the charter school statute at G.L. c. 71, § 89(dd). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Department did not issue school, district, or state accountability determinations for 2020 due to the cancellation of state assessments and school closures related to COVID-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The school is currently overenrolled by three students and as a result is out of compliance with the terms of its charter. Charter schools do not receive tuition for students enrolled above the school’s maximum enrollment. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The school is currently overenrolled by three students and as a result is out of compliance with the terms of its charter. Charter schools do not receive tuition for students enrolled above the school’s maximum enrollment. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The school is currently overenrolled by five students and as a result is out of compliance with the terms of its charter. Charter schools do not receive tuition for students enrolled above the school’s maximum enrollment. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The school is currently overenrolled by seven students and as a result is out of compliance with the terms of its charter. Charter schools do not receive tuition for students enrolled above the school’s maximum enrollment. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Rather than assigning students to grade levels, the school assigns students to one of three categories. Students progress from Category I to Category III. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The Department received written comment from Superintendent Brenda Cassellius of Boston Public Schools and from the Education Law Task Force noting concerns about both academic performance and discipline rates at UP Boston. The Education Law Task Force is a group of attorneys and advocates that seeks to address education issues facing low-income students. The school committee for Boston Public Schools approved the renewal application of UP Boston. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)