*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Jeffrey C. Riley  *Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **Date:** | February 11, 2021 |
| **Subject:** | Charter Schools – Notification of Intended Actions and Report on Conditions for Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School, Holyoke Community Charter School, and Marblehead Community Charter Public 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."

I intend to remove the conditions currently imposed on the charters of Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School, Holyoke Community Charter School, and Marblehead Community Charter Public School. The rationale for each of these intended actions can be found starting on page two of this memorandum.

Please let me know by **Thursday, February 18, 2021,** if you wish to have any of these proposed actions brought to the full Board for review and vote at the February Board meeting.

| Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School | | | |
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| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Lowell |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 1995 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 150 | **Current Enrollment** | 88 [[1]](#footnote-1) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 9-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 9-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 0 [[2]](#footnote-2) | **Current Age of School** | 26 |
| **Mission Statement:**  The mission of Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School is to enable its students to achieve academic, social, and career success. This supportive school community identifies, encourages and develops interests and abilities, while acknowledging and respecting each student’s personal and cultural identity. | | | |

**School History**

Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School (LMACS) is an alternative high school that serves an at-risk population. By the end of its fifth charter term, in 2020, LMACS presented limited evidence of student academic outcomes. Due to the small number of students in grade 10 who take the statewide assessment each year, LMACS had insufficient data to render a level determination or classification. As part of its renewal application submitted in August 2019, the school provided its summary of statewide assessment results but did not provide any additional data demonstrating progress in student achievement. At the time of its 2020 renewal, I placed a condition on the school’s charter to ensure goals for non-statewide assessments were incorporated into the school’s accountability plan for its sixth charter term. Staff at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) worked closely with the school during its development of the new accountability plan.

**Progress Towards Meeting Conditions**

**Condition:** By August 1, 2020, LMACS 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.

**Status: Met**

On May 31, 2020, the school submitted a draft of its accountability plan for the sixth charter term. The Department provided feedback and assisted the school with revisions. The Department gave provisional approval to the school on August 7, 2020, indicating that the school needed to submit its accountability plan for final approval. The plan establishes academic performance objectives for students to demonstrate mathematics and reading achievement and growth measures for Achieve3000 and Accuplacer Test of College Readiness assessments.

OnOctober 20, 2020,the LMACS board of trustees submitted a request for final approval of the proposed accountability plan for the school’s sixth charter term. The request met requirements and was reasonable and consistent with Department guidelines, the charter school statute, and regulations. I granted approval of the accountability plan on November 3, 2020. The Department will annually monitor the extent to which LMACS administers and reports student academic performance data for its Accountability Plan measures.

| **Holyoke Community Charter School** | | | |
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| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Holyoke |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 2005 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2010, 2015, 2020 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 702 | **Current Enrollment** | 702[[3]](#footnote-3) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | K-8 | **Current Grade Span** | K-8 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 109[[4]](#footnote-4) | **Current Age of School** | 16 |
| **Mission Statement:**  The mission of Holyoke Community Charter School is to promote the joy of learning and to prepare children for success as students, workers, and citizens by providing them with a high quality public education. | | | |

**School History**

Holyoke Community Charter School (HCCS) enrolled more than 20 percent of its total population from outside of Holyoke in 2017-18 and 2018-19. The charter school statute, G.L. c. 71, § 89(n), requires a school enrolling more than 20 percent of its total enrollment from school districts not included in its original charter for two consecutive years to request an amendment to its charter to reflect its actual enrollment pattern; for schools chartered before January 1, 2011, such as HCCS, the Board or the Commissioner establishes a timeline of not less than 5 years for the school to comply with this requirement. At the time of its 2020 renewal, I placed a condition on the school’s charter to address the statutory requirement.

**Progress Towards Meeting Conditions**

**Condition:** By August 1, 2020, HCCS will submit for Department approval a plan that ensures that enrollment from outside of Holyoke does not exceed 20 percent of the school’s total population by June 30, 2025, and a corresponding charter amendment request for the school’s maximum enrollment, enrollment policy, and any other relevant material terms. Alternatively, HCCS may submit an amendment request that reflects the school’s actual enrollment pattern.

**Status: Met**

On July 23, 2020, the school submitted a request to amend the school’s charter and become a regional school. The school seeks to create a charter region comprised of Holyoke and Chicopee that reflects the school’s actual enrollment pattern. The request met requirements for submission and was reasonable and consistent with Department guidelines, the charter school statute, and regulations. At the February Board meeting, I will recommend that the Board approve this request for a charter amendment, with a sub-cap for Chicopee enrollment.

| **Marblehead Community Charter Public School** | | | |
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| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Marblehead |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 1995 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 230 | **Current Enrollment** | 208[[5]](#footnote-5) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 4-8 | **Current Grade Span** | 4-8 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 90[[6]](#footnote-6) | **Current Age of School** | 26 |
| **Mission Statement:**  Marblehead Community Charter Public School fosters a community that empowers children to become capable, self-determining, fully engaged individuals who are critical and creative thinkers committed to achieving their highest intellectual, artistic, social, emotional, and physical potential. We are dedicated to involving, learning from, participating in, and serving our school community and the community at large. | | | |

**School History**

Marblehead Community Charter Public School (MCCPS) enrolled more than 20 percent of its total population from outside of Marblehead in 2017-18 and 2018-19. The charter school statute, G.L. c. 71, § 89, requires a school enrolling more than 20 percent of its total enrollment from school districts not included in its original charter for two consecutive years to request an amendment to its charter to reflect its actual enrollment pattern; for schools chartered before January 1, 2011, such as MCCPS, the Board or the Commissioner establishes a timeline of not less than 5 years for the school to comply with this requirement. At the time of its 2020 renewal, I placed a condition on the school’s charter to address the statutory requirement.

**Progress Towards Meeting Conditions**

**Condition:** By August 1, 2020, MCCPS will submit for Department approval a plan that ensures that enrollment from outside of Marblehead does not exceed 20 percent of the school’s total population by June 30, 2025, and a corresponding charter amendment request for the school’s maximum enrollment, enrollment policy, and any other relevant material terms. Alternatively, MCCPS may submit an amendment request that reflects the school’s actual enrollment pattern.

**Status: Met**

On July 29, 2020, the school submitted a request to amend the school’s charter and become a regional school. The request would create a charter region comprised of Marblehead, Swampscott, and Nahant that reflects the school’s actual enrollment pattern. At the February Board meeting, I will recommend that the Board approve this request for a charter amendment, with a sub-cap for Nahant enrollment.

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If you have any questions regarding removal of these conditions or require additional information, please contact Alison Bagg, Director of the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign (781-338-3218); Cliff Chuang, Senior Associate Commissioner (781-338-3222); or me.

1. As reported in the Student Information Management System (SIMS) as of October 1, 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As reported in the Initial Report of Charter School Waitlist as of March 16, 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. As reported in the Student Information Management System (SIMS) as of October 1, 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. As reported in the Initial Report of Charter School Waitlist as of March 16, 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. As reported in the Student Information Management System (SIMS) as of October 1, 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. As reported in the Initial Report of Charter School Waitlist as of March 16, 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)