*****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:** | January 14, 2022 |
| **Subject:** | Charter Schools – Application for New Charter School |

By statute, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) grants charters for new charter schools at its meeting in February. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) received initial applications for two Commonwealth charter schools in August 2021. I invited one of the applicant groups to submit a final application. In November 2021, the Department received the final application to establish the proposed Innovators Charter School.

This memorandum provides a preview of the charter application currently under review and the Department’s review process. The proposed school is listed in the table that follows. The executive summary for the final application, as prepared by the applicant group, is attached.

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| **Proposed Commonwealth  Charter School Name** | **Districts to be Served** | **Grade Span** | **Max Enrollment** | **Proposed**  **Opening Date** |
| Innovators Charter School | New Bedford and Fall River | 6–12 | 735 | 2022 |

The proposed Innovators Charter School would serve two districts that performed in the lowest 10 percent of all districts on the MCAS in 2018 and 2019.

Also attached is a detailed description of the review process and the criteria for Commonwealth charter school applications. Briefly, the charter school final application review process includes the components that follow.

* Public comment*.* During the current application process, the Board held a public hearing in December in New Bedford. Several Board members attended the hearing. Superintendents and school committees in the districts to be served by the proposed schools were invited to submit written comments. Written comments were also accepted from other government officials and members of the public. Prior to the February meeting, you will receive access to a recording of the public hearing and copies of all written comments that the Department has received. In addition, the Chair will ask those Board members who attended the hearing to make brief oral reports to the full Board at the February meeting if the Commissioner recommends the applicant group to receive a charter.
* Review panel*.* In December, a review panel of internal and external reviewers met to discuss the applicant group’s response to the application criteria and to identify areas of the application where clarification from the applicant was needed.
* Interview*.* In December, the Department conducted an interview with the applicant group. Applicant groups typically have the following participate in the interview: proposed members of its board of trustees; proposed school employees, if identified; and representatives of anticipated partners in the operation of the school, if identified. The Department prepares a summary of the applicant interview, which will be sent to the Board if the applicant group is recommended for charter award.

I will forward to the Board, prior to its February meeting, my decision regarding any recommendation for the award of a new charter. In the meantime, if you have any questions on the pending charter application or the review process, please contact Alison Bagg, Director, at 781-338-3218; Alyssa Hopkins, Assistant Director, at 781-605-4476; Cliff Chuang, Senior Associate Commissioner, at 781-338-3222; or me.

Attachments: Description of the Charter Application Review Process

Criteria for Review of Charter Applications

Executive Summary of Proposed Innovators Charter School