# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Russell D. Johnston, Acting Commissioner |
| **Date:** | March 18, 2025 |
| **Subject:** | Charter Schools - Proposed Contract with Management Organization for Roxbury Preparatory Charter School |

The board of trustees of the Roxbury Preparatory Charter School (RPCS) intends to renew its third contract with Uncommon Schools, Inc. (USI), to procure substantially all educational services. RPCS was founded by John B. King, Jr. Evan Rudall, and Dr. Keith Motely in 1999, one of the first charter schools in Boston. The school currently serves 1,126 students in grades 5-12. RPCS has contracted with USI since 2011. The school’s charter was renewed in 2024, and the school plans to continue its management relationship with USI for its fifth charter term.

Under the charter school statute, G.L. c. 71, § 89(k)(5), the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) must approve contracts between charter schools and entities from which they intend to procure substantially all educational services. The boards of trustees of charter schools are permitted to enter into contracts for services to achieve their mission and educational objectives, including services related to the implementation of the educational program and school operations. When the relationship between a charter school and a vendor results in the provision of substantially all educational services through a combination of educational and operational support, the Board must approve the contract. The Board’s involvement ensures that the charter school board of trustees fulfills its statutory and fiduciary responsibility to supervise and control the school while safeguarding the public interest.

Prior to Board action, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) reviews the technical and legal aspects of all proposed contracts. The school’s board of trustees worked with Department staff to ensure the proposed contract addresses all the required elements and protects public resources. The Department reviewed the final revised contract between RPCS and USI, and it is reasonable and consistent with the charter school statute, the regulations, and Department guidance. The contract delineates the roles and responsibilities of RPCS and USI; describes how the board of trustees will monitor the academic performance and fiscal health of RPCS; describes how the board of trustees will monitor and evaluate the performance of USI; specifies the total fee for services; describes the payment structure; delineates authority over hiring and firing; and specifies the conditions and procedures for contract renewal and termination.

The RPCS board of trustees has voted to approve the proposed contract. A copy of the executed contract is attached. The charter school contracts with USI for services that include but are not limited to provision of curriculum, assessments, data analytics, professional development, student recruitment and retention, staff recruitment, human resources, project management for state reporting, fundraising, grants management, information technology, accounting, grants management, business office services, and support to and development of the leadership teams of each RPCS campus. There is no change in the fee or payment structure for the new charter term. RPCS pays quarterly payments to USI based upon 13.5 percent of its public revenue less costs associated with occupancy and maintenance of the school’s facilities. In the projected FY2025 budget reported in the school’s 2023-24 annual report, the estimated USI fee was approximately $3.6 million; the school’s total projected expenditures are approximately $31.4 million.

Without Board approval, the contract for the current charter term (2024-2029) does not take effect. If the Board declines to approve the contract, RPCS will be required to sever the relationship and to find alternative arrangements for the services provided by USI. The school’s funding would not change if the contract were terminated. Instead, the school would expend the costs associated with the USI contract to perform the various services required for implementation of the educational program through other contractual relationships or the employment of additional school staff. If the RPCS contract with USI is not approved, the school would be unable to implement the curriculum and assessments currently provided by USI; other services provided by USI would cease. With the Board’s approval, the school will continue to implement its educational program as described in the school’s charter under the authority of the board of trustees and the oversight of the Department and Board.

I recommend that the Board vote to approve the contract. A motion for this approval is attached.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Alison Bagg, Director (781-338-3218); Alyssa Hopkins, Assistant Director (781-605-4476); or me.

Attachments:

RPCS Contract

Motion