*****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 3, 2022 |
| **Subject:** | Renewal of Charters – Notification of Intended Actions for Christa McAuliffe Charter School; Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School; KIPP Academy Boston Charter School; Libertas Academy Charter School; Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School; and Veritas Preparatory Charter 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.” Under this authority, I intend to renew the charters of six schools, four unconditionally and two with conditions. The schools I intend to renew without conditions are Christa McAuliffe Charter School; KIPP Academy Boston Charter School; Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School; and Veritas Preparatory Charter School. I intend to renew with conditions the charters of Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School and Libertas Academy Charter School. 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. No comment from superintendents was received for any of the schools.

Please let me know by **Thursday, February 10**, 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 chart on page 7 of this memorandum provides a dashboard with a summary of ratings for the six 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 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 2018 and 2019. Statewide assessments were not administered in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Statewide assessments were administered in spring 2021, but results were not used to issue accountability determinations.

**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 six schools that I intend to renew follows.

**Summary of Performance[[1]](#footnote-2) and Intended Commissioner Action**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area of Charter School Accountability** | **Criterion** | **Christa McAuliffe Charter School** | **Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School** | **KIPP Academy Boston Charter School** | **Libertas Academy Charter School** | **Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School** | **Veritas Preparatory Charter School** |
| **Faithfulness to Charter** | Mission and Key Design Elements |  Meets | **** Partially Meets |  Meets | **** Partially Meets | **** Exceeds |  Meets |
| Access and Equity | **** Partially Meets | **** Partially Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |
| Dissemination |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets | **** Exceeds |
| **Academic Program Success** | Student Performance[[2]](#footnote-3) | Not requiring assistance or intervention40th percentile | Requiring assistance or intervention8th percentile | Not requiring assistance or intervention35th percentile | Requiring assistance or intervention6th percentile | Insufficient Data | Not requiring assistance or intervention53rd percentile |
| **Organizational Viability** | Governance |  Meets | **** Partially Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |  Meets |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Intended Commissioner Action** | Unconditional Renewal | Renew with a Condition | Unconditional Renewal | Renew with a Condition | Unconditional Renewal | Unconditional Renewal |

**Christa McAuliffe Charter School**

| Christa McAuliffe Charter School |
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| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Framingham |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional | **Districts in Region** | Ashland, Framingham, Holliston, Hopkinton, Marlborough, Natick, Southborough, and Sudbury |
| **Year Opened** | 2002 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2007, 2012, 2017 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 396 | **Current Enrollment** | 388 (October 2021) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 6-8 | **Current Grade Span** | 6-8 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 30 (March 2021) | **Current Age of School** | 20 |
| **Mission Statement:** The mission of the Christa McAuliffe Charter School is to cultivate within each member of a diverse student body, through the Expeditionary Learning design, an intense commitment to self and community, the courage and insight to set high standards for academic and personal success, and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to achieve those standards.  |

During its fourth charter term, Christa McAuliffe Charter School (CMCS) has demonstrated progress in student achievement.[[3]](#footnote-4) In 2019, CMCS was classified as not requiring assistance or intervention.[[4]](#footnote-5) According to the statewide accountability system, the school made moderate progress toward targets and is in the 40th percentile when compared to other schools administering similar assessments.

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 reported that it met a majority of the goals in its Accountability Plan. The school reported that it did not meet a majority of the goals in its Accountability Plan in 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The school has disseminated its best practices to other public schools in its district and across the state.

Student attrition and stability is of moderate concern. During the charter term, the rate of attrition for all students was consistently above the third quartile for comparison schools, and the rate of stability was below the first quartile in two different years.[[5]](#footnote-6) The school has implemented an approved Recruitment and Retention Plan that includes enhanced strategies to reduce attrition and improve stability, including providing more therapeutic supports for students with disabilities, hiring a trilingual family engagement coordinator who can communicate in Spanish and Portuguese in addition to English, and hiring more counselors to address students’ social-emotional needs. Rates of attrition generally declined during the charter term.

The school’s rates of out-of-school suspension are also of moderate concern. During the charter term, the school consistently assigned students to out-of-school suspension at rates higher than the third quartile for comparison schools. The school has taken steps to reduce discipline rates, including implementing restorative practices and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Rates of out-of-school suspension generally declined during the charter term.

Throughout the charter term, members of the CMCS 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 CMCS.

**Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School**

| Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School |
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| **Type of Charter** | Horace Mann III | **Location** | Boston |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 2012 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2017 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 325 | **Current Enrollment** | 286 (October 2021) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | PK-5 | **Current Grade Span** | PK-5 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 61 (March 2021) | **Current Age of School** | 10 |
| **Mission Statement:** The Dudley Street School has a three-part mission:1. To provide a world class education for all students, preparing them for long-term academic success and responsible civic engagement;
2. To serve as a driver of human and social capital development, preparing outstanding new teachers to drive excellent student outcomes throughout Boston; and
3. To serve as a partner in catalyzing improvement of all schools in the Dudley area.
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During its second charter term, Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School (DSNCS) has demonstrated limited progress in student achievement.[[6]](#footnote-7) In 2019, DSNCS was classified as requiring assistance or intervention.[[7]](#footnote-8) According to the statewide accountability system, the school made moderate progress toward targets but is in the 8th percentile when compared to other schools administering similar assessments.

During the charter term, the school has been somewhat faithful to the terms of its charter. The school implements its key design elements but achieved only partial success in accomplishing its mission due to limited progress in academic achievement. The school reported that it met a majority of the goals in its Accountability Plan. 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.

There is a moderate concern about the school’s efforts to provide access to its programming. The school does not advertise the availability of special education and English learner programs, which is an expectation for charter schools. Department staff will work with the school to address this concern.

During the charter term, members of the DSNCS board of trustees developed in their roles as public agents. Toward the end of the charter term, the board provided generally competent and appropriate governance and oversight of the school’s financial health, academic performance, and school administration. The board, however, engages in limited strategic and continuous improvement planning. Department staff will work with the school to address this concern.

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

**Condition:** By December 31, 2024, 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. Should the school demonstrate significant and sustained academic improvement before 2024, the Commissioner may consider removing this condition, rather than wait until December 31, 2024.

**KIPP Academy Boston Charter School**

| KIPP Academy 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** | 2012 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2017 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 588 | **Current Enrollment** | 600[[8]](#footnote-9) (October 2021) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | K-8 | **Current Grade Span** | K-8 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 1,134 (March 2021) | **Current Age of School** | 10 |
| **Mission Statement:** Together with families and communities, we create a joyful, academically excellent school that prepares students at KIPP Academy Boston Charter School with the skills and confidence to pursue the paths they choose -college, career, and beyond- so they can lead fulfilling lives and build a more just world. |

During its second charter term, KIPP Academy Boston Charter School (KABCS) has demonstrated progress in student achievement.[[9]](#footnote-10) In 2019, KABCS was classified as not requiring assistance or intervention.[[10]](#footnote-11) According to the statewide accountability system, the school met or exceeded targets and is in the 35th percentile when compared to other schools administering similar assessments.

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 reported that it did not meet a majority of the goals in its Accountability Plan 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 district and across the state.

Throughout the charter term, members of the school’s 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 KABCS.

**Libertas Academy Charter School**

| Libertas Academy Charter School |
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| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Springfield |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 2017 | **Year(s) Renewed** | N/A |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 630 | **Current Enrollment** | 332 (October 2021) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 6-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 6-9 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 0 (March 2021) | **Current Age of School** | 5 |
| **Mission Statement:** Through rigorous academics, character development, and strong supports for every learner, Libertas Academy Charter School prepares all sixth through twelfth grade students to succeed within the college of their choice and to be positive, engaged members of their communities.  |

During its first charter term, Libertas Academy Charter School (LACS) has demonstrated limited progress in student achievement.[[11]](#footnote-12) In 2019, LACS was classified as requiring assistance or intervention.[[12]](#footnote-13) According to the statewide accountability system, the school made substantial progress toward targets but is in the 6th percentile when compared to other schools administering similar assessments.

During the charter term, the school has been somewhat faithful to the terms of its charter. The school achieved partial success in accomplishing its mission and implementing all of its key design elements due to limited progress in academic achievement. The school reported that it did not meet a majority of the goals in its Accountability Plan 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 district and across the state.

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

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

**Condition:** By December 31, 2024, 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. Should the school demonstrate significant and sustained academic improvement before 2024, the Commissioner may consider removing this condition, rather than wait until December 31, 2024.

**Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School**

| Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School |
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| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Hadley |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional | **Districts in Region** | See below[[13]](#footnote-14) |
| **Year Opened** | 2007 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2012, 2017 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 584 | **Current Enrollment** | 572 (October 2021) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | K-12 | **Current Grade Span** | K-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 177 (March 2021) | **Current Age of School** | 15 |
| **Mission Statement:** The Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School (PVCICS) is a K-12th grade educational program that produces academically strong students highly proficient in Chinese and English. The program goals are:* To develop proficiency in Mandarin Chinese.
* To maintain and extend students’ proficiency in English.
* To develop high levels of academic attainment, meeting or exceeding national and state standards, through rigorous study and instruction aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.
* To develop students’ understanding of Chinese culture and the ability to interact successfully with others whose language and/or culture differs from their own.

PVCICS serves the Pioneer Valley region and offers a diverse group of students an innovative educational opportunity unavailable elsewhere in Massachusetts. PVCICS works to disseminate the school’s experiences and serve as a resource for schools trying to develop similar programs. |

During its third charter term, Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School (PVCICS) has demonstrated progress in student achievement.[[14]](#footnote-15) In 2019, there was insufficient data for PVCICS to receive an overall classification or accountability percentile.[[15]](#footnote-16) This is because of the small cohort size and number of students in grade 10 who took the MCAS in 2018. The percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations on each MCAS test administered in 2019 was higher for the school than for the state in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science. On the Next Generation MCAS, 68 percent of students at the school in grades 3 through 8 met or exceeded expectations in ELA, compared with 52 percent for the state. Sixty percent of students in grades 3 through 8 met or exceeded expectations in mathematics, compared with 49 percent for the state. Seventy-six percent of students in grades 5 and 8 met or exceeded expectations in science, compared with 48 percent for the state. Ninety percent of students in grade 10 met or exceeded expectations in ELA, compared with 61 percent for the state. Eighty-six percent of students in grade 10 met or exceeded expectations in mathematics, compared with 59 percent for the state. On the Legacy MCAS, 93 percent of students in grade 10 scored Proficient or higher in science and technology/engineering, compared with 74 percent for the state.

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 provides a rigorous academic program that enables students to develop high levels of proficiency in both English and Chinese. The school reported that it met a majority of the goals in its Accountability Plan. The school implemented an approved Recruitment and Retention Plan and has 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 PVCICS 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 PVCICS.

**Veritas Preparatory Charter School**

| Veritas Preparatory Charter School |
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| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Springfield |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Non-Regional | **Districts in Region** | N/A |
| **Year Opened** | 2012 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2017 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 766 | **Current Enrollment** | 380 (October 2021) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 5-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 5-8 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | 124 (March 2021) | **Current Age of School** | 10 |
| **Mission Statement:** Veritas Preparatory Charter School prepares students in grades 5 to 12 to complete, achieve, and succeed in college and beyond. |

During its second charter term, Veritas Preparatory Charter School (VPCS) has demonstrated progress in student achievement.[[16]](#footnote-17) In 2019, VPCS was classified as not requiring assistance or intervention.[[17]](#footnote-18) According to the statewide accountability system, the school made substantial progress toward targets and is in the 53rd percentile when compared to other schools administering similar assessments.

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 reported that it met a majority of the goals in its Accountability Plan. The school implemented an approved Recruitment and Retention Plan and has disseminated its best practices in an exemplary manner to other public schools in its district and across the state.

Throughout the charter term, members of the VPCS 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 VPCS.

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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 follows.

**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-2)
2. Accountability information represents determinations from 2019. The Department did not issue accountability determinations for the 2019-20 school year due to the cancellation of state assessments and school closures related to COVID-19. The Department also did not issue accountability determinations in 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. 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-4)
4. 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. The Department also did not issue accountability determinations in 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Comparison schools include all of the public schools in the charter school’s district or region (if the school is a regional school) that serve at least one grade level of students that overlaps with the grade levels served by the charter school. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. 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-7)
7. 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. The Department also did not issue accountability determinations in 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. As of October 1, 2021, the school was overenrolled by 12 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-9)
9. 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-10)
10. 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. The Department also did not issue accountability determinations in 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. 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-12)
12. 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. The Department also did not issue accountability determinations in 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Agawam, Amherst, Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Chesterfield-Goshen, Chicopee, Conway, Deerfield, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Frontier, Gill-Montague, Granby, Greenfield, Hadley, Hampden-Wilbraham, Hampshire, Hatfield, Hawlemont, Holyoke, Leverett, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Mohawk Trail, Northampton, Pelham, Pioneer Valley, Shutesbury, South Hadley, Southampton, Southwick-Tolland-Granville, Springfield, Sunderland, West Springfield, Westfield, Westhampton, Whately, and Williamsburg. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. 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-15)
15. 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. The Department also did not issue accountability determinations in 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. 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-17)
17. 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. The Department also did not issue accountability determinations in 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)