



Press Release

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Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner to Recommend 17 New Charter Schools Across the Commonwealth

MALDEN - Thursday, February 17, 2011 – Massachusetts Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester today announced he will recommend that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education grant 17 new charters this month to groups seeking to open schools in Boston, Chelsea, Lawrence, Lynn, New Bedford, Salem and Springfield.

The Commissioner's recommendation includes 14 Commonwealth charter schools and three Horace Mann charter schools. Commonwealth charter schools are fully autonomous and operate independently of the local school district. Horace Mann charter schools are developed and operated in close cooperation with the host school district, and require approval of the local school committee.

"I have every expectation that these 17 charter schools, if granted a charter by the Board later this month, are well positioned to succeed academically and become high performing organizations," said Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester. "This year's group of applicants was impressive in terms of the volume of interested parties; the quality of the proposals; and the potential to provide students with a strong academic program."

Commissioner Chester will recommend approval of Commonwealth charters for the following 14 schools:

- Alma del Mar Charter School (New Bedford)
- Bridge Boston Charter School (Boston)
- Community Day Charter Public School – Riverside (Lawrence)
- Community Day Charter Public School – South (Lawrence)
- Dorchester Preparatory Charter School (Boston)
- Edward W. Brooke Charter School 2 (Boston)
- Edward W. Brooke Charter School 3 (Regional school serving Boston and Chelsea)
- Excel Academy Charter School – Boston II (Boston)
- Excel Academy Charter School – Chelsea (Chelsea)
- Grove Hall Preparatory Charter School (Boston)
- KIPP Academy Boston Charter School (Boston)
- Lynn Preparatory Charter School (Lynn)

- MATCH Community Day Charter Public School (Boston)
- Veritas Preparatory Charter School (Springfield)

The Commissioner will also recommend approval of Horace Mann charters for the following three schools:

- Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School (Boston)
- Salem Community Charter School (Salem)
- UP Academy Charter School of Boston (Boston)

Under the new education reform law that Governor Patrick signed in January 2010, the cap on district net school spending for funding of charter schools was raised from 9 percent to a maximum of 18 percent through incremental steps (beginning with a move to 12 percent in 2011 followed by one percent annual increases reaching to 18). The cap lift only applies to districts with academic performance in the lowest 10 percent as measured by MCAS, and applicants under the cap lift must have a proven track record of success in increasing academic attainment and commit to working with a diverse population of students.

Charter schools are open to all Massachusetts students, with enrollment preference given to students in the district or region where the school is located. All charter schools are chartered for a period of 5 years. At the end of that period, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education reviews the school's performance in detail before making a decision on whether to renew the charter.

A total of 42 charter school prospectuses were submitted during the 2010-11 cycle last August, representing the highest number received in a single year since 1997. Applicants for 25 of those 42 prospectuses were invited by the Department to submit final proposals for consideration in September 2010. A total of 23 final applications were submitted in November. Finalists were taken through a multi-step process that included public hearings in the areas where the schools would be located with at least two Board members present for each hearing, a panel review of the final application by a team of Department and external reviewers, a lengthy public comment process, and in-person interviews.

Founders of groups that were not recommended to be chartered by the Commissioner will receive feedback on their application and are invited to reapply during future application cycles.

The Board will vote on these recommendations at its February 28, 2011 regular meeting.

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Commissioner's Recommendations for New Charter Schools

School	District or Region	Grades	Maximum Enrollment	Anticipated Opening
Commonwealth Charter Schools				
Alma del Mar Charter School	New Bedford	K-8	360	September 2011
Bridge Boston Charter School	Boston	K1-8	335	September 2011
Community Day Charter Public School - Riverside	Lawrence	K1-8	400	September 2012
Community Day Charter Public School - South	Lawrence	K1-8	400	September 2012
Dorchester Preparatory Charter School	Boston	5-12	600	September 2012
Edward W. Brooke Charter School 2	Boston	K-8	475	September 2011
Edward W. Brooke Charter School 3	Regional school serving Boston and Chelsea	K-8	475	September 2012
Excel Academy Charter School – Boston II	Boston	5-12	448	September 2012
Excel Academy Charter School - Chelsea	Chelsea	5-8	224	September 2011
Grove Hall Preparatory Charter School	Boston	5-12	600	September 2011
KIPP Academy Boston Charter School	Boston	K-8	588	September 2012
Lynn Preparatory Charter School	Lynn	K-8	324	September 2011
MATCH Community Day Charter Public School	Boston	K1-12	700	September 2011
Veritas Preparatory Charter School	Springfield	5-8	324	September 2012
Horace Mann Charter Schools				
Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School	Boston	6-12	595	September 2011
Salem Community Charter School	Salem	9-12	125	September 2011
UP Academy Charter School of Boston	Boston	6-8	500	September 2011