



Massachusetts Department of
ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY
EDUCATION

**Application for a Massachusetts Public Charter School:
Current Boards of Trustees**

2014-2015

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370
www.doe.mass.edu



This document was prepared by the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

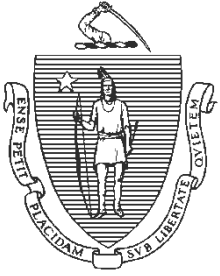


The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an affirmative action employer, is committed to ensuring that all of its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public. The Department does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Copyright © 2014 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Permission is hereby granted to copy any or all parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes. Please credit the "Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.....	5
THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND REVIEW STAGES.....	18
2014-2015 COMMONWEALTH PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS TIMELINE FOR CURRENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES.....	21
2014-2015 HORACE MANN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS TIMELINE FOR CURRENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES.....	22
2014-2015 HORACE MANN II PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS TIMELINE (NO DATES)	23
REQUIRED LETTER OF INTENT.....	24
COMMONWEALTH AND HORACE MANN CHARTER APPLICANT INFORMATION SHEET.....	25
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	28
PROVEN PROVIDER REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS FOR CURRENT BOARDS OF TRUSTEES.....	29
COMMONWEALTH CHARTER SCHOOL CERTIFICATION STATEMENT.....	32
HORACE MANN I CHARTER SCHOOL CERTIFICATION STATEMENT.....	33
HORACE MANN II CHARTER SCHOOL CERTIFICATION STATEMENT	34
HORACE MANN III CHARTER SCHOOL CERTIFICATION STATEMENT	35
GENERAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES	36
STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES FOR THE FEDERAL CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM GRANT.....	39
COMMONWEALTH AND HORACE MANN CHARTER APPLICATION OUTLINE FOR CURRENT BOARDS OF TRUSTEES.....	40
COMMONWEALTH AND HORACE MANN CHARTER APPLICATION FOR CURRENT CHARTER SCHOOL BOARDS OF TRUSTEES.....	42
I. HOW WILL THE SCHOOL DEMONSTRATE FAITHFULNESS TO CHARTER?.....	42
<i>A. Mission</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>B. Key Design Elements.....</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>C. Description of the Community(ies) to Be Served.....</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>D. Enrollment and Recruitment</i>	<i>44</i>
II. HOW WILL THE SCHOOL DEMONSTRATE ACADEMIC SUCCESS?.....	45
<i>A. Overview of Program Delivery.....</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>B. Curriculum and Instruction.....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>C. Student Performance, Assessment, and Program Evaluation</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>D. Supports for Diverse Learners.....</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>E. Culture and Family Engagement.....</i>	<i>51</i>
III. HOW WILL THE SCHOOL DEMONSTRATE ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY?.....	53
<i>A. Capacity</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>B. Governance</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>C. Management.....</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>D. Facilities and Student Transportation.....</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>E. School Finances</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>F. Action Plan.....</i>	<i>62</i>
IV. REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS – FINAL APPLICATION	63



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

Telephone: (781) 338-3000
TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

To: Potential Charter Applicants
From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner
Date: April 30, 2014
Subject: 2014-2015 Charter Application Process

For the 2014-2015 charter application cycle, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) will accept applications for new Commonwealth charters in the majority of districts, with the exception of Boston and Somerville. Applicants are strongly encouraged to propose schools in areas that are currently underserved by high quality charter schools and where seats are available under the current NSS caps. The actual number of seats that will be available in any district in any particular year cannot be predicted with certainty and is dependent on several factors, including district enrollment, district spending levels, and student enrollment for existing charter schools. The final decision on the availability of seats will be made by the Board, based on periodically updated estimates from the Department's school finance office. Please note that several districts may not have sufficient seats available to support a viable school, including Fall River and Holyoke. In the case of Boston and Somerville, approximately 95 percent of the available seats have been granted and applications for new charter schools or expansions to existing charter schools cannot be considered. The remaining 5 percent will be reserved to accommodate future fluctuations in the net school spending (NSS) caps.

The number of available seats published in this year's application is estimated and **subject to change** under the amended regulations for charter schools, 603 CMR 1.00, that the Board approved in March 2014. The Department's calculations to identify the lowest performing 10 percent of districts subject to the 18 percent NSS cap are now aligned with the metrics we use for our state accountability system. The charter school regulations now align the weighting used in the Department's calculation of the lowest performing 10 percent of districts with the weighting of indicators used to calculate school and district levels for the state's accountability system, specifically 80 percent achievement and 20 percent growth. Applicant groups will be kept informed by the Department of future changes that impact the availability of seats in their proposed charter region.

The 2014-2015 Application for a Massachusetts Commonwealth or Horace Mann Public Charter School has been updated to reflect the revisions made to the Charter School Performance Criteria (Criteria) and to provide a differentiated application process for current boards of trustees of Massachusetts charter schools. Charter application criteria were reorganized to better align with the ten Criteria that frame the Department's evaluation of school performance in the three guiding

areas of charter school accountability: academic program success, organizational viability, and faithfulness to charter. Additionally, in the interest of differentiating amongst first time charter applicants and current charter school operators, the Department has modified its charter application process to eliminate the prospectus stage for current charter school boards of trustees aiming to replicate the model of an existing successful charter school. This revision has been made in alignment with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' recommendations, and resulted in the creation of an Application for a Massachusetts Public Charter School targeted for use by current boards of trustees, in addition to the standard application for all other categories of applicants.

Charter applicants are encouraged to contact the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign at charterschools@doe.mass.edu or 781-338-3227 with any questions or feedback on the charter application process and application requirements.

Thank you for your interest in improving public education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Definitions

Q. What is a charter school in Massachusetts?

A. A charter school is a public school that is governed by a board of trustees and operates independently of any school committee under a five year charter granted by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board). It has the freedom to organize around a core mission, curriculum, theme, and/or teaching method and to control its own budget and hire (and fire) teachers and staff. In return for this freedom, a charter school must attract students and produce positive results within five years or its charter will not be renewed. There are two categories of charter schools, Commonwealth charter schools and Horace Mann charter schools. Horace Mann and Commonwealth charter schools differ in that a Horace Mann charter school must have its charter approved by the local school committee and, in some cases, the local teacher's union in addition to the Board.

In addition, the revision of M.G.L. c. 71, § 89, in 2010 created three types of Horace Mann charter schools, each with a particular set of requirements. Requirements for the involvement of the collective bargaining unit vary by type. To the extent provided by their charters and as agreed to in a memoranda of understanding (MOU) with the school committee, as well as the faculty and relevant collective bargaining units, Horace Mann charter schools may be exempt from certain provisions in local collective bargaining agreements. Employees of a Horace Mann charter school, however, remain members of the local collective bargaining unit; continue to accrue seniority; and receive, at a minimum, the salary and benefits established by the local collective bargaining agreement. All charter schools, including Horace Mann charter schools, must complete the Department's opening procedures process prior to opening.

Q. What is the purpose of establishing a charter school?

A. The statute, in G.L. c. 71, § 89 (b), asserts that charter schools are to be established (1) to stimulate the development of innovative programs within public education; (2) to provide opportunities for innovative learning and assessments; (3) to provide parents and students with greater options in choosing schools within and outside their school districts; (4) to provide teachers with a vehicle for establishing schools with alternative, innovative methods of educational instruction and school structure and management; (5) to encourage performance-based educational programs; (6) to hold teachers and school administrators accountable for students' educational outcomes; and (7) to provide models for replication in other public schools.

Q. What is a charter, and how does a school amend its charter?

A. A school's charter is comprised of certain material terms that are described in the charter application. The charter is granted to the school's board of trustees. If these terms are modified significantly by a charter school's board of trustees, they must request approval of the change through the amendment process, before the change may be implemented. The areas requiring amendment are described in 603 CMR 1.10. These material terms are the districts specified in the school's charter; grade span; maximum enrollment; a contract with an education management organization that is providing or planning to provide substantially all of the school's educational services; school name; mission; governance or leadership structure; educational programs, curriculum models or whole-school designs; bylaws; membership of the board of trustees; memorandum of understanding for Horace Mann charter schools; location of school, if such change involves relocating to or adding a facility in another municipality; schedule (e.g., length of school year, school week, or school day); enrollment policy and application for admission; or expulsion policy. The Department's *Charter Amendment Guidelines* is available online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/governance/>.

In addition, pursuant to CMR 603 1.10(7), if a charter school enrolls more than 20 percent of its students from districts not specified in its charter for two consecutive years, the school must submit a request to amend its charter to reflect actual enrollment patterns.

Q. What are the three types of Horace Mann charter schools?

A. The three types are:

Horace Mann I: Open to any district for a new school. The application must be submitted with the approval of the local collective bargaining unit and the school committee in the district in which it is located. Any MOU modifying provisions of a collective bargaining agreement must be approved by the school committee and collective bargaining unit and is submitted with the application. Pursuant 603 CMR 1.10 and 1.11, all Horace Mann charter renewals and certain charter amendments must be approved by the local school committee and teachers' union.

Horace Mann II: Open to any district for conversion of an existing school. Horace Mann II applications may be submitted at any time however, the process for review remains the same as that for all other Horace Mann and Commonwealth applications, with similar periods of time for review of the prospectus and final application, and charter granting. The application to convert an existing school is submitted with the approval of the school committee. Any MOU modifying provisions of a collective bargaining agreement must be approved by a majority of faculty at the school, with the vote to be held within 30 days of submission of the application. While the Division of Labor Relations has not yet ruled on who must sign an MOU for a Horace Mann II school, it is our understanding that the school committee and the collective bargaining unit(s) must agree to any changes in the relevant collective bargaining agreements. We encourage Horace Mann II charter school applicants to consult their own legal counsel regarding these issues. Pursuant 603 CMR 1.10 and 1.11, all Horace Mann charter renewals and certain charter amendments must be approved by the local school committee and teachers' union.

Horace Mann III: Open to any district for a new school. Not less than four must be located in Boston. The application must be submitted with the approval of the school committee. An agreement with the local collective bargaining unit is not required prior to Board approval, however, the charter school's board of trustees must negotiate with the collective bargaining unit and the school committee in good faith regarding any modifications to collective bargaining agreements following the award of a charter. While the Division of Labor Relations has not yet ruled on whether changes in collective bargaining agreements required by a charter may be implemented without the agreement of the relevant collective bargaining unit(s) for Horace Mann III charter schools, it is our understanding that the charter may be fully implemented if an agreement on such an MOU is not reached at least 30 days before the school's scheduled opening. We encourage Horace Mann III charter school applicants to consult their own legal counsel regarding these issues. Pursuant 603 CMR 1.10, all Horace Mann charter renewals and certain charter amendments must be approved by the local school committee and teachers' union.

Q. What is a Proven Provider?

A. Applicants in districts that have performed on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) in the lowest 10 percent statewide for two consecutive previous years and where the 9 percent net school spending cap has been or is expected to be raised, must meet the definition of Proven Provider in 603 CMR 1.02:

- (a) two or more persons who had primary or significant responsibility serving, for at least five years, in a leadership role in a school or similar program that has a record of academic success and organizational viability;
- (b) a non-profit education management organization or non-profit charter management organization, in operation for at least five years, that has a record of academic success and organizational viability;
- (c) the board of trustees of an existing charter school that has a record of academic success and organizational viability; or

- (d) an education management organization or charter management organization that has a record of academic success and organizational viability in operating or starting public schools and with which an applicant proposes to contract.

Q. What are the qualifications to achieve Proven Provider status?

A. The regulations, in 603 CMR 1.04(4), define the qualifications of a Proven Provider as follows:

The applicant must submit evidence satisfactory to the Commissioner to demonstrate a significant management or leadership role at a school or similar program that is an academic success, a viable organization, and relevant to the proposed charter.

- (a) The applicant shall submit a detailed description of role(s) and responsibilities at the successful school(s) or program(s).
- (b) The applicant shall submit data demonstrating success in student academic performance and evidence of academic program success, including but not limited to:
 - 1. proficiency levels and growth measures on the Massachusetts comprehensive assessment system or equivalent assessments for all students and for one or more targeted subgroups as defined in M.G.L. c.71, § 89(i)(3) which are similar to statewide averages in English language arts and Mathematics for all students in Massachusetts in comparable grades, over no less than a three-year period for cohorts of students;
 - 2. student performance on other standardized tests over no less than a three-year period for cohorts of students, if available, which demonstrates student achievement levels that are similar to statewide averages in English language arts and Mathematics for all students in Massachusetts in comparable grades;
 - 3. attendance, retention, and attrition data;
 - 4. graduation and dropout data, if applicable; and
 - 5. in-school and out-of-school suspension rates.
- (c) The applicant shall submit evidence of organizational viability, which shall include but not be limited to effective governance, effective financial management, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- (d) The applicant shall provide evidence to demonstrate that the successful school serves a student population similar to the population to be served by the proposed charter, and that the program to be offered at the proposed charter is similar to, or represents a reasonable modification of, the successful school.
- (e) Applicants shall provide any other information as required by the Commissioner.

For applicants with a current or previous relationship to a Massachusetts charter school, the Commissioner may consider all information related to such school's performance, including his evaluation in connection with each renewal of its charter.

Q. When is a Proven Provider required?

A. As stated above, a Proven Provider is required for a Commonwealth charter school that is to be located in a district that performed in the lowest 10 percent of districts statewide on the MCAS in the two previous consecutive years and where the 9 percent net school spending cap has been or is expected to be raised. Applicants proposing a charter school in a district in the lowest 10 percent should carefully consider whether to apply as a Proven Provider, even if the 9 percent net school spending cap has not been reached because of the potential for multiple applicants within the district, triggering an increase in the net school spending cap.

Q. If the applicant group is proposing a regional charter school, when is Proven Provider status required?

A. A Proven Provider is required if any district in a proposed region performed in the lowest 10 percent of districts statewide on the MCAS in the two previous consecutive years and where the 9 percent net school spending cap has been or is expected to be raised.

Application Process

Q. Who may apply for a charter?

A. Any group or entity may apply for a public school charter, with the exception of for-profit companies and private/parochial schools. Typically, charter applicant groups include a mix of parents, teachers, non-profit organizations, and community leaders. The application for a charter school may be filed in conjunction with a college, university, museum, other similar non-profit entity, or any combination of these individuals and groups. An existing charter school board of trustees may apply to hold more than one charter.

Q. Can employees from private or parochial schools apply for a charter?

A. The regulations, in 603 CMR 1.04 (6)(g) states that “Private and parochial schools shall not be eligible for charter school status. If members of a charter applicant group are on the governing board or management of a private or parochial school that plans to close or closes around the time of receiving a charter, it creates a rebuttable presumption that the private or parochial school is seeking charter status for the purpose of securing public funding. To rebut this presumption, the applicant group must establish facts sufficient for the Department to determine that funding is not the primary reason they are seeking a charter as the private or parochial school is closing. In making a determination, the Department will compare the governance, management, and other characteristics of the private or parochial school and the governance, management, and other characteristics of the charter school, including but not limited to curriculum, student body, staff, leadership, location, and the financial plan for the school.”

Q. What is the application review process?

A. The objective of the charter application review process is to award charters to applicants who show the greatest probability of creating public schools of the highest quality. The Department conducts a process that includes a prospectus and a final application phase, participation by internal and external reviewers for both phases, opportunities for written public comment, public hearings, and an interview with each applicant group and proposed board of trustees in the final application phase. Prospectuses and final applications are each reviewed against extensive criteria set forth in the charter statute, G.L. c. 71, § 89, and the charter school regulations, 603 CMR 1.04 and as further elaborated in the Application for a Massachusetts Charter Public School.

Q. Are there categories of applicants that participate in a charter application process that consists of only one stage?

A. During the 2014-2015 application cycle, the Department has introduced a required one stage process for current charter school boards of trustees who intend to apply for a new charter and operate a charter school network. In the one stage process, current charter school boards of trustees are exempt from submitting a prospectus but must still meet Proven Provider requirements, if applicable, and submit a complete final application addressing the criteria that is set forth in the charter statute, G.L. c. 71, § 89, and the charter school regulations, 603 CMR 1.04(3) and further elaborated in the Application for a Massachusetts Charter Public School for Current Boards of Trustees. The final application review process for current boards of trustees is virtually identical to other categories of applicants.

Q. What is the purpose of the prospectus?

A. The applicant group writes the prospectus in order to communicate plans for a potential charter school and demonstrate that they have the potential to create a high quality public charter school. At the prospectus phase, Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign staff present a synopsis of the information to the Commissioner and, based upon the information presented, the Commissioner determines

which applicant groups will be invited to move into the final application stage. Questions and concerns raised are communicated in writing to all applicants after the prospectus phase. If a Proven Provider determination is required, the applicant group must submit evidence satisfactory to the Commissioner to demonstrate a significant management or leadership role at a school or similar program that is an academic success, a viable organization, and relevant to the proposed charter at the same time as prospectus submission through a Proven Provider request.

Q. What is the purpose of a final application?

A. The applicant group writes the final application in order to communicate plans for a potential charter school and demonstrate that they have a strong probability of creating a high quality public charter school. If an applicant group's board of trustees is granted a charter, the final application serves to define the material terms of the charter to which the school is held accountable, along with any approved amendments, as required in 603 CMR 1.10.

Q. To whom is the charter granted?

A. A charter is granted to the proposed school's board of trustees, an independent state public body. While an applicant group may also include individuals who do not intend to serve on the board of trustees, a proposed board must be in place for the charter to be granted. An existing charter school board of trustees may apply for and be authorized to hold more than one charter.

Q. How many total charters are available to be granted in February of 2015?

A. Not more than 120 charter schools (48 Horace Mann and 72 Commonwealth) may operate in the Commonwealth at any one time, with the exception of schools located in the lowest 10 percent statewide in districts in which the 9 percent net school spending cap has been or would be exceeded, and Horace Mann II (conversion) charter schools. There are 15 Commonwealth charters available in school districts subject to the 9 percent net school spending cap, and 38 Horace Mann I and III charters, of which 9 can be Horace Mann III charters, available to be granted in the 2014-2015 application cycle.

Q. If we miss the deadline for submission of the prospectus, can we still submit a final application?

A. No. Only those prospectuses submitted by the July deadline are eligible to receive an invitation by the Commissioner to submit a final application in November. There are only two exceptions to this rule - Horace Mann II (conversion) charter schools and Massachusetts charter school boards of trustees.

Horace Mann II applicants are encouraged to adhere to the standard schedule, but may submit prospectuses at any time. If the Horace Mann II prospectus receives an invitation by the Commissioner to submit a final application, the due date for the final application is based on the original submission date of the prospectus. Applicants for Horace Mann II charters that choose not to adhere to the standard schedule are subject to the same process for review as for all other Horace Mann and Commonwealth applicants, and similar periods of time for review of the prospectus and final application, and charter granting.

During the 2014-2015 application cycle, the Department has introduced a required one stage process for Massachusetts charter school boards of trustees who apply for a new charter and intend to operate a charter school network. In the one stage process, current boards of trustees are exempt from submitting a prospectus but must still meet Proven Provider requirements, if applicable, and submit a complete final application addressing the criteria that is set forth in the charter statute, G.L. c. 71, § 89, and the charter school regulations, 603 CMR 1.04(3) and further elaborated in the Application for a Massachusetts Charter Public School for Current Boards of Trustees. Boards of trustees that currently hold the charter(s) of school(s) that have undergone one successful renewal; are not presently under conditions or probation; are identified as Level 1 or Level 2, with school percentiles of 50 percent or higher under the Commonwealth's accountability system; and are identified as in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations are eligible to participate in the one stage cycle. Charter schools that do not meet all of these parameters may consult with the Department regarding their unique circumstances. The final application review process for current boards of trustees is virtually identical to other categories of applicants.

Q. Are there additional criteria for current charter school boards of trustees applying for a new Commonwealth charter and intending to build a network of schools?

A. Yes. Additional information is required for existing charter school boards of trustees applying for a new charter to allow the Department to appropriately evaluate the final application. The Department has instituted for the 2014-2015 application cycle, the Application for a Massachusetts Commonwealth and Horace Mann Public Charter School for Current Boards of Trustees for use only by current boards of trustees applying for additional charter(s). Current boards of trustees must submit a complete and separate application for each proposed school in the network, including those for which provisional seats would be required.

Q. Are there differences in the application for proposed Commonwealth and Horace Mann charter schools?

A. Yes. While the review and approval process is the same for Commonwealth and Horace Mann charter schools, there are select criteria and requirements within the Application targeted for each type based on particular statutory and regulatory requirements.

Q. Are there differences between the application for proposed conversion Horace Mann charter schools and new Horace Mann charter schools?

A. Yes. Additional information is required for applicant groups from existing schools proposing a conversion Horace Mann charter school to allow the Department to appropriately evaluate the prospectus and/or final application. Additional criteria are noted in many sections of the Application.

Q. What are the limits on the number of charter schools that can be established in a given city or town?

A. Notwithstanding the total number of charters available, state law limits the number of charters by type and location that the Board can grant as follows:

- In any one year, the Board may approve **only one** regional Commonwealth charter school application to be located in a district where overall student performance on the MCAS was in the top 10 percent in the preceding year.
- The Board may not approve a Commonwealth charter in any community with a population of less than 30,000, as determined by the most recent United States Census estimate, unless it is a regional charter school.
- At least two charters approved in any year must be granted for charter schools located in districts where overall student performance on the MCAS is in the lowest 10 percent statewide in the two years prior to the charter application.

There is also a statutory limit on the amount of funds that can be transferred to charter schools from any one district for the purpose of charter school tuition. A district's total charter school tuition payment to Commonwealth charter schools cannot exceed 9 percent of that district's net school spending, unless that district has performed in the lowest 10 percent statewide on the MCAS for the previous two years. If the district is in the lowest 10 percent, the cap on net school spending has been raised to 16 percent for 2014 (fiscal year 2015), increasing at a rate of one additional percent each year until the new maximum of 18 percent is reached in fiscal year 2017. The board may provisionally award seats to new charter applicants and to existing charter schools that will become available in future years pursuant to the schedule set forth in section 9 of chapter 12 of the acts of 2010, provided, that if a district is no longer in the lowest 10 percent, any remaining provisional seats may not be used. Enrollment projections and districts in the lowest 10 percent of MCAS performance are subject to change.

For the upcoming 2014-15 charter application cycle, the Department will accept applications for new Commonwealth charters in the majority of districts, with the exception of Boston and Somerville. There are also several other districts approaching their cap for charter tuition spending. Applicants are advised that

the Board will grant no more than 95 percent of the available seats in any district as reflected in this year's calculations. The remaining 5 percent will be reserved to accommodate future fluctuations in the net school spending caps. In the case of Boston and Somerville, approximately 95 percent of the available seats have been granted and applications cannot be considered.

Please contact the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign at (781) 338-3227 for further information if you have questions in regard to a specific district.

Q. Should our proposed charter school serve a region?

A. If the charter school intends to enroll students from a number of school districts or be located in a small and/or rural town of less than 30,000 in population according to the most recent United States census estimate, applying for regional status is appropriate. A regional charter school is authorized to serve, and give preference in enrollment to, students residing within a specified region of more than one district. In applying for a regional charter, applicants should specify all of the school districts, including regional districts, that comprise the geographic region to be served and a rationale for the proposed region.

Q. Will the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education give preference to certain kinds of applications and applicant groups?

A. The Board will give preference to those applications and applicant groups that demonstrate the greatest probability of creating public schools of the highest quality by meeting the comprehensive criteria of the rigorous application process. The statute also gives preference to applicants proposing to build networks in more than one municipality in which the district is approaching its net school spending cap and have performed in the lowest 10 percent statewide on the MCAS.

Q. Is preference given to applications for charter schools that plan to open in 2015?

A. No. Applicant groups that propose to open in 2015 or beyond are evaluated using the same criteria. However, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may award a charter conditional on the school opening in 2016, even if the applicant group applies to open in 2015.

Q. Who reviews and evaluates charter school applications and the capacity of applicant groups?

A. Each charter school prospectus and final application is evaluated by Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign and other Department staff, as well as individuals outside the Department who have education, business, non-profit, financial, legal, or organizational expertise. The reviewer's role is advisory and provides information on the strengths and weaknesses of the prospectus or application against the application criteria. In the final application stage, reviewers are also asked to pose questions for use in the interview with the applicant group and proposed board of trustees. At the prospectus stage, reviewers submit an evaluation form based upon the application criteria. At the final application stage, reviewers meet with staff from the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign to discuss the application.

Q. What is the basis of the interview with the applicant group and proposed board of trustees?

A. The Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign conducts an interview with the applicant group and proposed board of trustees as a part of the final application process. Comments and questions raised through the application review process, public hearings, and public comment serve as the basis for the interview. The interview serves as an opportunity for the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign staff to assess the capacity of the applicant group and proposed board of trustees to establish an effective charter school. The Department maintains a written, detailed summary of interviews with final charter applicants and includes that summary in the materials that are provided to local school officials, the public, and the Board.

Q. What role do external reviewers play in the application process?

A. The role of external reviewers is solely advisory. Teams of reviewers, including current and former teachers; researchers; charter school founders; and school, business, and public policy leaders, as well as Department staff members, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of prospectuses and final applications

against the stated criteria. The information regarding strengths and weaknesses, along with questions raised by review panels regarding final applications serve as the basis of the applicant group interviews.

Q. How much weight will be given to written comments from superintendents and testimony at public hearings?

A. Public hearings are a critical component of the application review process. They are an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate broad community support, and for opponents to demonstrate opposition in public and in the presence of members of the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign and the Board. The Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign and Board solicit and review comments from the school committees of the school district(s) from which the applicant intends to draw students and any contiguous districts. All public comment, including written comment from superintendents and school committees, is considered in the review process. Written or oral opposition alone is not reasonable grounds for denial of a charter. Similarly, strong public support alone does not constitute reasonable grounds for granting a charter. Any substantial issues raised in public comment that demonstrate weaknesses in a specific final application as measured against the stated criteria is taken into account and addressed during the applicant group's interview with the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign. The public hearing on a final application is held in the school district in which the proposed charter school intends to locate.

Q. By what point in the application process should an applicant secure a facility?

A. During the application process, applicant groups must describe a process for identifying a potential facility for the proposed charter school. Applicants who enter into lease or purchase agreements in advance of receiving a charter from the Board, however, do so at their own risk.

Q. What is the basis for the decision to award a charter?

A. Final applications must be filed by the deadline and meet the submission requirements as described in the Application for a Massachusetts Public Charter School (Application) to be considered. Final applications that are timely filed and meet the submission requirements are evaluated to determine whether the applicant group has demonstrated the capacity and ability to establish and operate a successful charter school, in accordance with the criteria set forth in the charter statute, G.L. c. 71, § 89, and the charter school regulations, 603 CMR 1.04 and as further elaborated in the Application. The Department's Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign uses the comprehensive criteria in the Application to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the final application. The Department also conducts an interview with the applicant group, receives and reviews public comment, and holds a public hearing in the district in which the school proposes to be located. The Commissioner receives and reviews the results of this process and presents his recommendation to the Board, along with a comprehensive written summary of all materials prepared by the Department evaluating or recommending approval or disapproval of the final application. The Department sends a copy of the comprehensive summary to the applicant as well. The Board makes the final decision on the award of charters.

Q. Can the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's decisions on charter applications be appealed by the applicant group or other members of the public?

A. No. A decision of the Board on a charter application is final. The application process leading up to the Board's decision is designed to afford applicant groups and members of the public several opportunities to clarify the proposal made in an application and to make the case for, or against, the award of a charter. Applicants who are not awarded a charter in 2015 may reapply in the future.

Q. How soon after a charter is granted can a school be opened?

A. Applicant groups may propose to open in the fall of either 2015 or 2016. It is important to note that if no students are attending a charter school within **19 months** from the date the charter was granted, the charter will be null and void, unless an extension is granted by the Commissioner. The next Board decision on the awarding of charters may occur at the February 2015 meeting, with the possible exception of Horace Mann II applications. Founding boards that are awarded charters and elect to open in the fall of 2015 must then submit pre-enrollment data by mid-March 2015, approximately two weeks later, on the number of

students who have been admitted to the school through the charter school enrollment process. Schools that elect to open in 2016, report this information in March 2016. This fact, and other requirements surrounding opening procedures, has led many applicant groups to take a planning year and open the year after receiving a charter. As previously noted, the Board may award a charter conditional on the school opening in 2016, even if the applicant group applies to open in 2015. All schools must successfully complete the opening procedures process before opening. If a new school fails to comply with any specified condition prior to the opening of the school, the Commissioner may recommend to the Board that the school be placed on probation or that the charter be revoked. A charter school must open within nineteen months of charter granting or lose its charter, unless an extension is granted by the Commissioner.

In the case of Horace Mann II (conversion) charter schools that choose not to adhere to the deadlines required of applicants for other types of charter schools, the Board decision on awarding charters may occur four months after the final application is submitted, and the school may re-open as a Horace Mann II charter school after the successful completion of the opening procedures process.

Funding

Q. How are Commonwealth charter schools funded?

A. For each child that a Commonwealth charter school enrolls, it receives a tuition amount from the state equal to a per-pupil amount calculated by the Department's school finance office. The state then deducts the same amount from the sending district's state aid account (the sending district being the school district in which the student resides). Like other public schools, Commonwealth charter schools are eligible to receive federal and state grant funds. Commonwealth charter schools may apply for private grants and receive contributions. For more detailed information about how the state calculates tuition payments for Commonwealth charter schools, visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/finance/tuition/>.

Q. How are Horace Mann charter schools funded?

A. Funding for a Horace Mann charter school comes directly from the school district in which the school is located, through a memorandum of understanding with the district. An application for a Horace Mann charter school may specify a total budget allocation that the school committee has approved for the charter school's first year. Each year thereafter, the board of trustees of a Horace Mann charter school will submit a budget request for the following fiscal year to the superintendent and school committee of the district. Under the law, a Horace Mann charter school cannot receive less than it would have under the district's standard budgetary allocation rules. A school may appeal a disproportionately small budget allocation to the Commissioner. Depending upon the terms of its charter and the memorandum of understanding, a Horace Mann charter school may receive its share of federal and state grant funds from the district or receive the funds directly. Horace Mann charter schools may apply for private grants and receive individual contributions.

Q. Will charter recipients be given start-up funding?

A. Currently, Massachusetts does not have the federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant available for future charter schools. The USED has yet to announce a new Request for Proposal (RFP) for the CSP but we hope it will be offered fall 2014. If the Department receives funding from the federally funded CSP grant, this grant allows new Commonwealth and Horace Mann charter schools to receive start-up funds to support the development and implementation of the school's instructional program during their planning period and first two years of operation. The submission of a charter application serves as the initial application for the CSP start-up grant funds. Additional details about these grants will be shared at information sessions and questions can be forwarded to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign at (781) 338-3227.

Q. Do Horace Mann charter schools qualify for start-up funding, if available, through the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign?

A. Yes, Horace Mann charter schools have access to the federally funded CSP grant, if available.

Q. Are charter schools eligible for state school building assistance funds?

A. The charter school statute states, "no school building assistance funds shall be awarded to a Commonwealth charter school for the purpose of constructing, reconstructing, or improving said school." The Massachusetts Legislature, however, has included a facilities component as part of the tuition paid to charter schools. For more detailed information about how the state calculates tuition payments for Commonwealth charter schools, visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/finance/>. Some charter schools may be eligible to apply for qualified zone academy bonds. The qualified zone academy bond (QZAB) program allows school districts and charter schools to obtain interest-free financing for the purpose of establishing "qualified zone academies." Qualified zone academies are schools, or programs within a school, which are located in economically distressed areas and whose curriculum is designed through school/business partnerships. See http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/sbuilding/qzab_rfp.html for more information.

Q. How does transportation work for charter schools?

A. Charter school regulations state "All students who reside in the school district in which a charter school is located shall be provided transportation by the district, provided that either (i) transportation is provided to district students in the same grade, or (ii) transportation is required by the student's individualized education program.... A district may not limit transportation to charter school students based on attendance zones or other geographic subdivisions of the district....The district shall accommodate the school day and school year specified in the school's charter, provided that the charter school shall make reasonable accommodations in setting its daily starting and ending times to foster cost-efficient transportation arrangements." Please see 603 CMR 1.07 (3) for the transportation section of the regulation in its entirety. Applicants for regional charter schools must indicate in the application whether or not the school will be providing transportation to qualify for reimbursement. For additional information, call the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign, 781-338-3227.

Q. Are charter schools entitled to federal funds?

A. Yes, Commonwealth and Horace Mann charter schools are eligible for federal entitlement funds on the same basis as all public schools, including those for Special Education, Title 1, and Safe and Drug Free Schools. Please visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/> for specific details about each grant program.

Laws and regulations¹

Q. Are laws and regulations waived for charter schools?

A. Charter schools must follow the same state educational standards, administer the same state tests, and abide by almost all the same state and federal laws and regulations as other public schools in the Commonwealth. Commonwealth charter schools however, are not subject to local school district rules and may operate without collective bargaining agreements. Horace Mann charter schools, depending on the terms of their charters, may be exempt from some local school district rules and some provisions of the local collective bargaining agreement and regulations. (As is the case for other public schools, charter schools may request waivers from state regulations.) When a waiver is requested by a Commonwealth charter school, the Commissioner will provide notice and opportunity to comment to the superintendent of each district served by the charter, if the granting of the waiver would have an impact on the district.

Q. Are for-profit/non-profit companies allowed to manage charter schools?

A. Yes. While for-profit education management organizations (EMO) may not hold the charter for a charter school in Massachusetts, state law explicitly allows charter school boards of trustees to procure education management services from non-profit and for-profit entities. The Board must approve all

¹The charter school statute is available at <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/71-89.htm>. The charter school regulations are available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr1.html>.

contracts between charter school boards of trustees and EMOs for substantially all educational services, prior to the contract taking effect. The application for a charter contains criteria that require the applicant to describe why the particular entity was selected, what due diligence the applicant group performed in choosing the entity, and to provide a draft of a management contract.

Q. Are Horace Mann charter schools considered a local education agency (LEA)?

A. Yes. Horace Mann charter schools are considered an LEA except for purposes of state aid, certain grant programs, collective bargaining, and any other purposes where such designation would conflict with law and regulation.

Q. What do the state curriculum frameworks and state tests mean for charter schools?

A. All public schools, including charter schools, must administer the MCAS tests. These tests are based on the curriculum frameworks adopted by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Charter schools must also administer any other assessment the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may require. MCAS results are used in the charter school accountability process and are central in evaluating whether a school is an academic success.

Q. Do charter schools serve students with special needs and students who are English language learners?

A. Yes. Charter schools cannot discriminate in admissions on the basis of special need or English language proficiency. Once admitted, students who have special needs or are English language learners must be appropriately identified, assessed, and served in accordance with federal and state requirements. For special education, this requires a qualified full- or part-time special education administrator and additional staff to meet the needs of a student's individualized education program. The number of staff required varies by level of services required and by the size of the school. For information on special education and charter schools, please see the Massachusetts Primer on Special Education and Charter Schools found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/sped/default.html>. For more information on special education laws and regulations see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/laws.html>. English language learners must be identified and supported in their acquisition of the English language through a program of sheltered English immersion and instructed by appropriately qualified staff. For more information on the laws and regulations relating to English language learners, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr14.html>.

Q. What is a Student Recruitment and Retention Plan?

A. Existing Massachusetts charter schools are required to have a student recruitment and retention plan that includes deliberate, specific strategies the school will use to attract, enroll, and retain a student population that, when compared to students in similar grades in schools from which the charter school enrolls students, contains a comparable academic and demographic profile as stated in G.L. c. 71, § 89(e-f).

The statute also requires that the plan include a detailed description of deliberate, specific strategies the school will use to maximize the number of students who successfully complete all school requirements and prevent students from dropping out. The student recruitment and retention plan is reported on and updated annually through the charter school accountability process, including consideration at renewal of how well the charter school has implemented its recruitment and retention plan and met its retention goal as stated in G.L. c. 71, § 89 (i)(3).

Q. May applicants be given an entrance exam?

A. No. State law prohibits a charter school from discriminating in its enrollment process on the basis of academic achievement. Charter schools may create eligibility thresholds for enrollment that are consistent with their grade levels. For instance, a charter high school may deny admission to students who have not completed the 8th grade based on the sending school's determination of grade completion, but it may not deny admission to students on the basis of their inability to do 8th grade level work. Diagnostic exams may be given to all students once the students are enrolled and students may then be placed at the appropriate grade level.

Q. May applicants and their families be required to attend interviews or informational meetings as a condition of enrollment?

A. No. State regulations prohibit a charter school from requiring potential students and their families to attend interviews or informational meetings as a condition of enrollment.

Q. How does the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act affect Massachusetts charter schools?

A. Because Massachusetts charter schools are public schools, the NCLB requirements are applicable to charter schools in the Commonwealth, including the requirement that teachers are highly qualified. See the federal No Child Left Behind Act home page at <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml?src=pb>, the Department's Technical Advisories, *The Impact of NCLB on Massachusetts Charter Schools*, at http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/tech_advisory/03_2.html, and *Teacher Qualifications in Massachusetts Charter Schools*, http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/tech_advisory/07_1.html, and the *Opening Procedures Handbook* at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/new/?section=handbook> for further guidance.

Q. What are the licensure/training requirements for charter school teachers?

A. The charter school regulations, in 603 CMR 1.07, require that all Massachusetts charter school teachers hired after August 10, 2000 must *either* be certified *OR* pass the appropriate Massachusetts Test(s) for Educator Licensure (MTEL) within one year of their date of employment. For more information on this requirement, please contact the Department's Office of Educator Quality at (781) 338-6600. Information on charter school teacher qualifications can be found at http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/tech_advisory/07_1.html.

Q. What are the licensure/training requirements for teachers regarding English language learner education in charter schools?

A. Every district, including charter schools who serve English language learners, are required to have at least one teacher who has an English as a Second Language, Transitional Bilingual Education, or English Language Learners license. The school is also required to develop and implement a professional development plan involving appropriate sheltered English immersion (SEI) training for all staff, including core academic teachers, serving English language learners. Keep in mind that all core academic teachers of English language learners, including those at charter schools, are required to obtain SEI endorsement.

Q. What are the licensure/training requirements for teachers regarding special education in Commonwealth charter schools?

A. Except for teachers of English as a second language, teachers in Commonwealth charter schools, including special education teachers, are not required to be licensed. Any staff implementing specialized instruction included in an Individual Education Plan (IEP) must meet the qualifications for service delivery provider established by the Department pursuant to IDEA § 34 CFR 300.156(a):

"The SEA must establish and maintain qualifications to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out the purposes of this part are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including that those personnel have the content knowledge and skills to serve children with disabilities."

The appropriate qualifications for a Commonwealth charter school staff to independently deliver specialized instruction are:

1. They hold a valid (in or out-of-state) license or its equivalent as a special education teacher for the appropriate grades and severity level and/or
2. They have successfully completed an undergraduate or graduate degree in an approved special education program.

Specialized instruction provided by personnel who do not meet the above qualifications must be delivered in consultation with a qualified individual who provides supervision and oversight of the delivery of the specialized instruction.

Q. How does a charter school know about annual reporting requirements?

A. The Department annually provides a list of major reporting requirements of all districts, including those that are relevant to charter schools, including the pre-enrollment report, annual reports, and annual audits.

Q. What types of resources are available on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's website?

A. Many guidance documents for charter schools are currently available on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's general website (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/>) and the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign website (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter>). Information includes: the *Charter School Administrative and Governance Guide*, the *Opening Procedures Handbook*, the *Common School Performance Criteria*, the *Application for a Massachusetts Public Charter School*, charter school news and headlines, contact information for all Massachusetts charter schools, including school and district profiles, charter school laws and regulations, technical advisories on specific topics, Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign staff contact information, the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, MCAS statistics and information, school finance, teacher licensure, and a calendar of Department of Elementary and Secondary Education events.

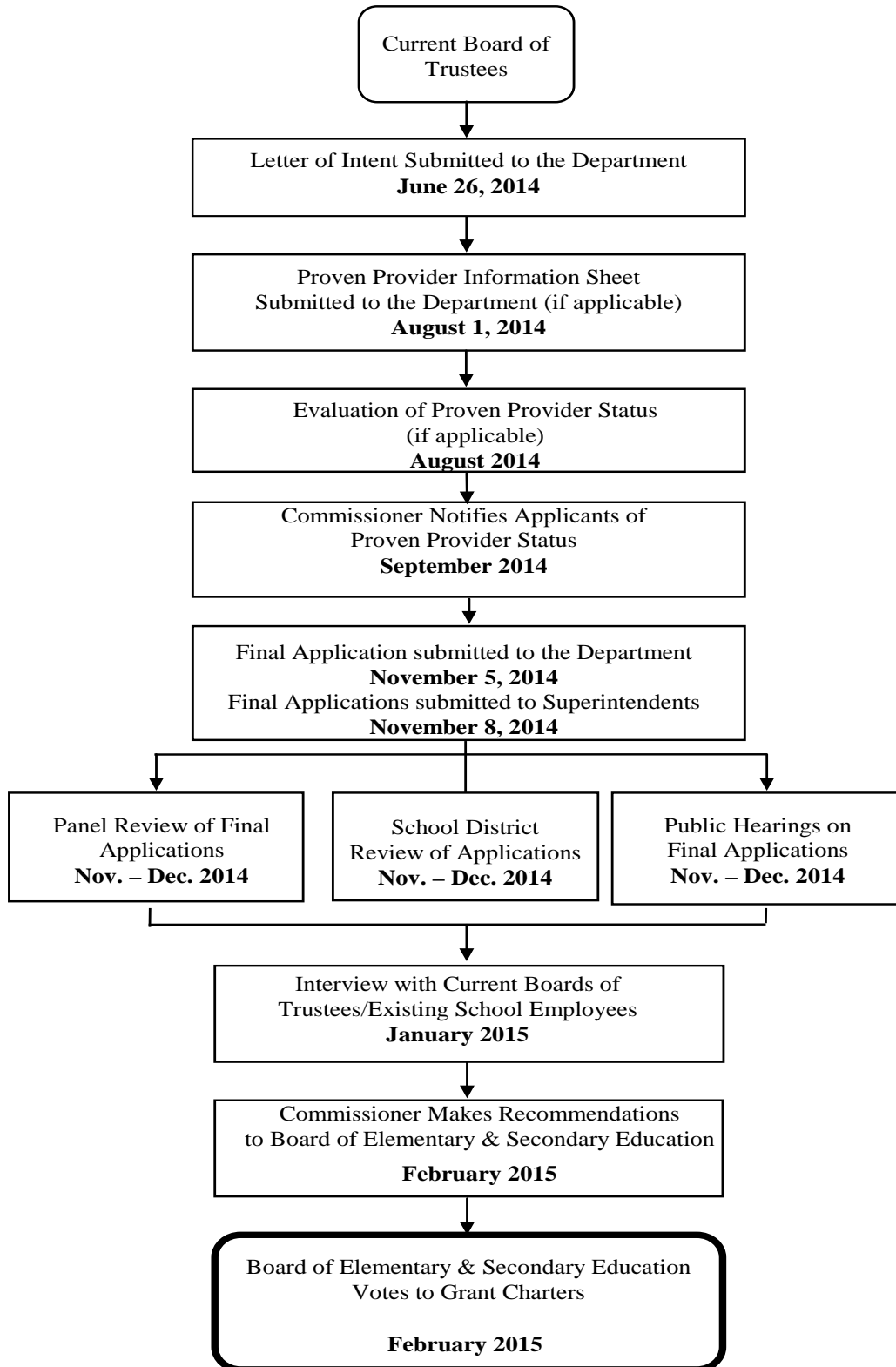
THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND REVIEW STAGES

<p>Deadlines</p>	<p>The deadline for receipt of all materials is 5:00 PM as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter of Intent..... June 26, 2014 • Proven Provider Request (if applicable).....August 1, 2014 • Final Application.....November 5, 2014
<p>Electronic Submission</p>	<p>The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) has instituted electronic submission for all charter applicants via an online tool. All eligible applicant groups will be required to participate in training related to application submission and the use of the online tool.</p>
<p>How to Submit</p> <p><i>Note: All documents, when submitted to the Department, become part of the public record.</i></p>	<p>Applicant groups will be asked to submit prospectus and final application electronically via an online tool as well as submit an unbound copy with original signatures to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906 (781) 338-3227</p>
<p>Letter of Intent, Executive Summary, and Applicant Information Sheet</p> <p><i>Note: Letter of Intent submissions are submitted via email to the Department.</i></p>	<p>Letter of Intent, Executive Summary, and Applicant Information Sheet are due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 26, 2014</p> <p>An applicant group’s letter of intent, executive summary, and applicant information sheet are emailed to charterschools@doe.mass.edu. All interested charter school applicants are required to notify the Department of their intention to apply for a charter.</p> <p>After submission of a letter of intent, applicant groups will be contacted by the Department to confirm attendance at the required two hour applicant training during the week of July 7 – 11, 2014.</p> <p>Applicants who do not require Proven Provider status are automatically eligible to submit a final application if the existing charter school has undergone one renewal; is not presently on conditions or probation; is identified as Level 1 or Level 2, with a school percentile of 50 percent or higher under the Commonwealth’s accountability system; and is in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations. Applicants will be contacted after Letter of Intent submissions to discuss any areas of concern identified by the Department regarding these parameters.</p>

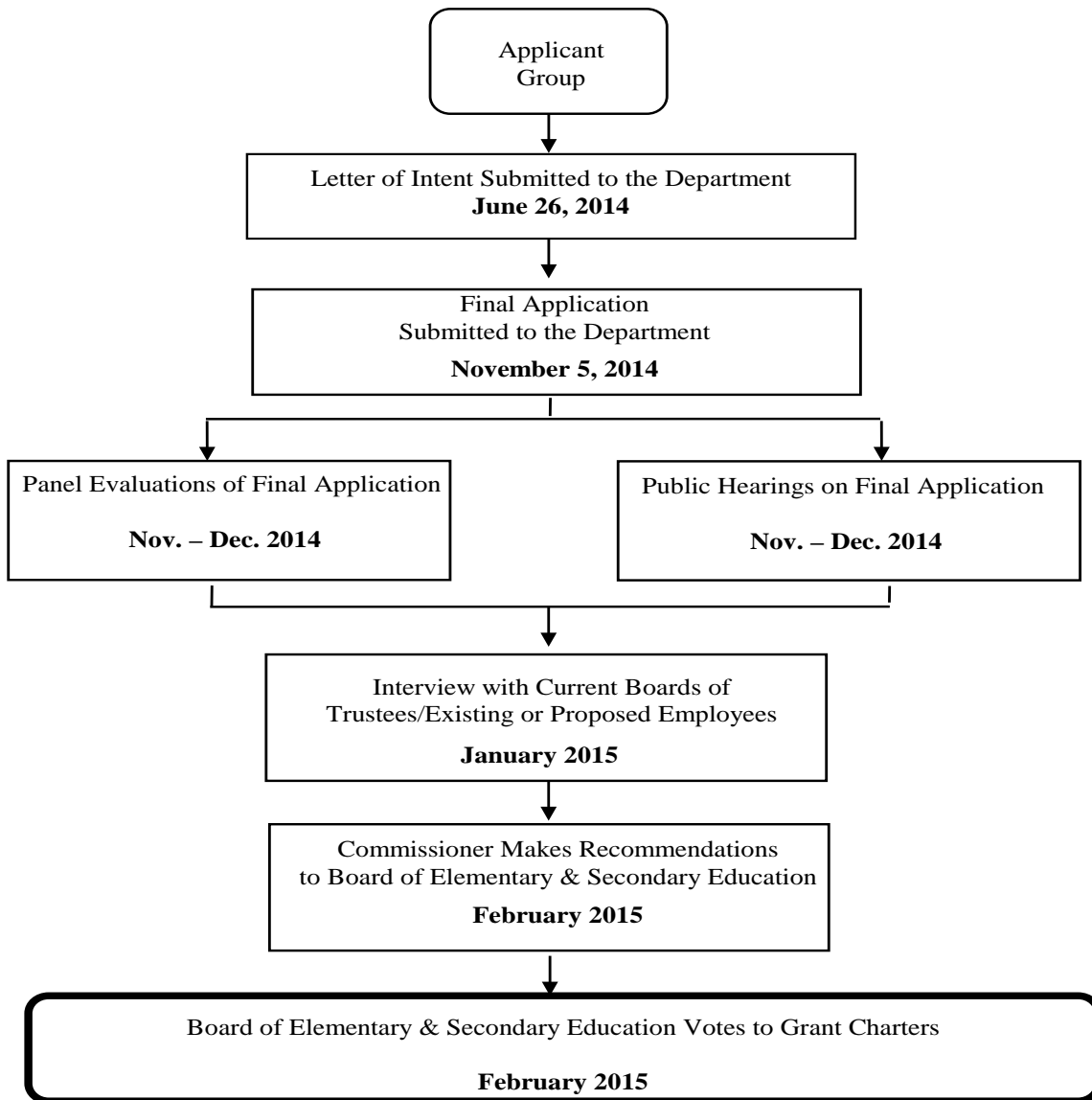
<p>Requirements for Consideration of Proven Provider Status (if applicable)</p>	<p>Proven Provider Request is due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, August 1, 2014</p> <p>All materials to support the request for Proven Provider status must be submitted via the online tool by August 1 in order to be considered.</p> <p>The Department will contact groups regarding the request for Proven Provider status once the complete request is received. Incomplete submissions will not be considered.</p>
<p>Applicant Notification of Proven Provider Status, if applicable</p>	<p>During the month of September 2014, applicant groups may be invited to submit a final application.</p> <p>An invitation to submit a final application is contingent on the Commissioner’s granting of proven provider status, if applicable. The timing for this determination is based on multiple variables, and will be completed as soon as possible during the month of September.</p>
<p>Submitting the Final Application</p> <p><i>Submit:</i></p> <p><i>A) One (1) unbound original copy with original signatures.</i></p> <p><i>B) Electronic submission via online tool</i></p>	<p>Final Application is due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 5, 2014</p> <p>Incomplete applications will not be accepted.</p> <p>District Review (November to January)</p> <p>Applicants for a Commonwealth charter must file a copy of the application with the school committee(s) in the school district(s) from which the charter school expects to enroll students by Friday, November 8, 2014. Submission to the office(s) of the superintendent(s) is considered sufficient to meet this requirement. Applicant groups must submit evidence the requirement has been met to the Department by Monday, November 10, 2014. Superintendents from those districts and all contiguous districts will be invited to submit written comments to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding the application and the impact of the proposed Commonwealth charter school on their district.</p>
<p>Review of Final Applications</p>	<p>The final application will be reviewed by the Department and external reviewers against the criteria described throughout the application.</p>
<p>Public Hearings</p>	<p>Public Hearings (November and December)</p> <p>The public hearing on a final application is held in the school district in which the proposed charter school intends to locate and attended by members of the public, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education member(s), and Department staff. Public hearings take place on a single weekday from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.</p>
<p>Interviews</p>	<p>Interview with Applicant Group/Board of Trustees (January)</p> <p>Department staff conduct an interview with the applicant group and current board of trustees. Comments and questions from the final application review teams, the public hearings, and the proposed sending districts will serve as a basis for the interview.</p>

<p>Commissioner's Recommendation</p>	<p>Commissioner's Recommendation (February)</p> <p>The Commissioner will review the results of this process and make recommendations to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding the award of charters.</p>
<p>Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Grants Charters</p>	<p>Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Votes on New Charter Schools (February)</p> <p>The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will vote to award charters no later than the February Board meeting. The Board reserves the right to grant a charter with the terms and conditions that it deems are appropriate, including, but not limited to, the opening date, grade span, and maximum enrollment of the school.</p>

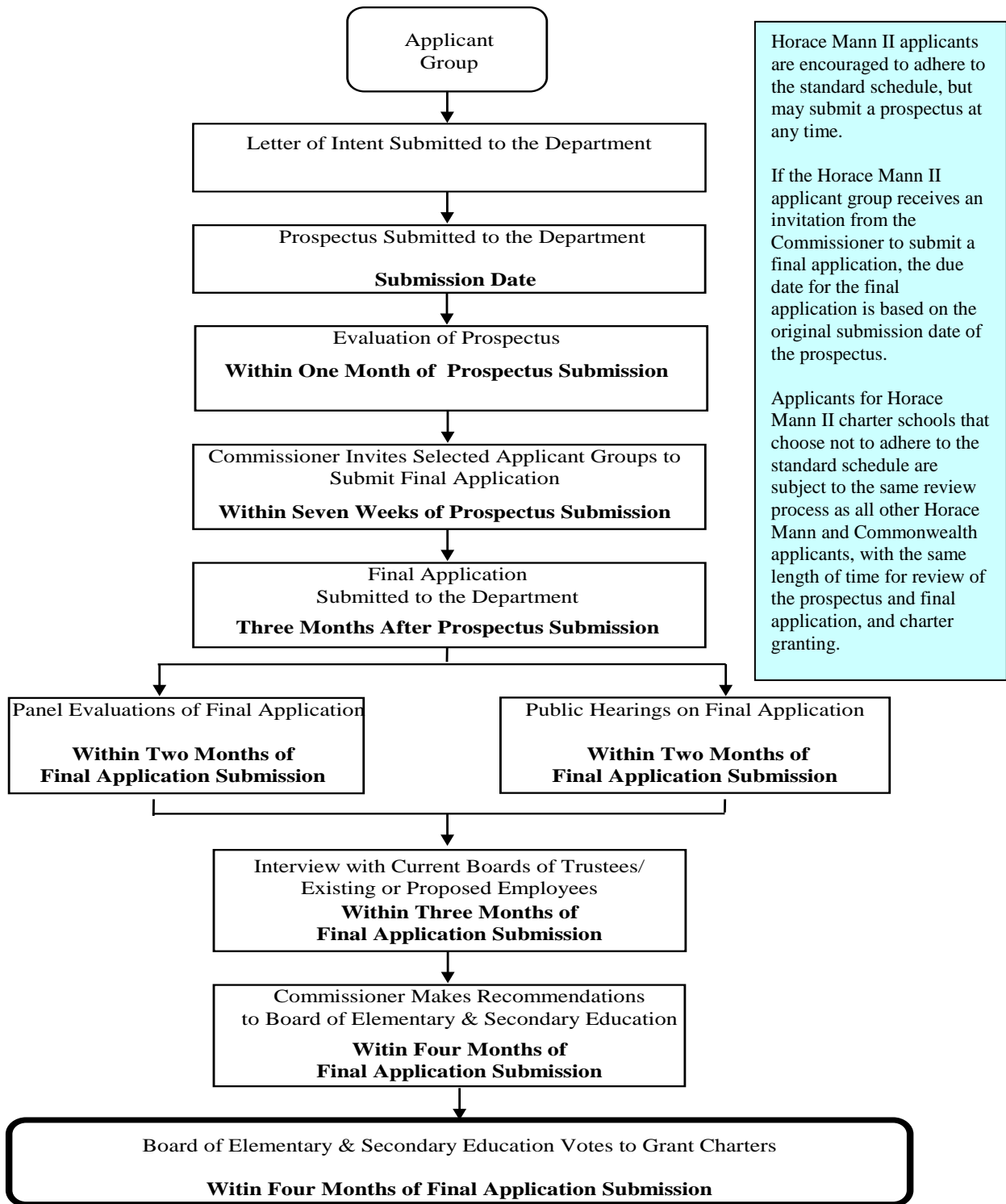
2014-2015 COMMONWEALTH PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS TIMELINE FOR CURRENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES



**2014-2015 HORACE MANN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION
AND REVIEW PROCESS TIMELINE FOR CURRENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES**



2014-2015 HORACE MANN II² PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS TIMELINE (NO DATES)



Horace Mann II applicants are encouraged to adhere to the standard schedule, but may submit a prospectus at any time.

If the Horace Mann II applicant group receives an invitation from the Commissioner to submit a final application, the due date for the final application is based on the original submission date of the prospectus.

Applicants for Horace Mann II charter schools that choose not to adhere to the standard schedule are subject to the same review process as all other Horace Mann and Commonwealth applicants, with the same length of time for review of the prospectus and final application, and charter granting.

² For a description of Horace Mann II Charter Schools, see the Questions and Answers.

REQUIRED LETTER OF INTENT

*Applicant groups are **required** to submit a letter of intent to the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education by June 26, 2014. An executive summary and the applicant information sheet must also be submitted with the letter of intent.*

Letter of Intent Template

Date

Contact Person's Name, Position/Role

Current Charter School

Mailing Address

City, State Zip Code

Daytime Phone, Email Address

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign

75 Pleasant Street

Malden, MA 02148-4906

Dear Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign,

Introductory sentence(s)

Provide a brief statement regarding the plan of the current board of trustees and school leadership team to develop and/or grow a charter school network. Provide a brief explanation of the mission and purposes of the proposed school and describe the type(s) of students to be served by the proposed school (e.g., targeted population, at risk youth) and the general approach to curriculum and teaching (e.g., Core Knowledge, Montessori, Coalition of Essential Schools, college preparatory, or replication of an existing school). Statement should also discuss these key design elements in relation to the current charter school(s).

Provide information on the composition of the applicant group in addition to the board and school leadership (e.g., parents, teachers, partner school district, non-profit organization) and if applicable, if the applicant group is applying as a proven provider or with what proven provider the applicant group proposes to contract.

Salutation,

Signature

Attachment (Applicant Information Sheet and Executive Summary)

COMMONWEALTH AND HORACE MANN CHARTER APPLICANT INFORMATION SHEET

This information is included with all application submissions. The application, including this form, will be posted on the Department website. Applicants are advised that the primary contact person may be contacted by the public and/or media with questions about the proposed school.

Name of Proposed Charter School: _____

School Address (if known): _____

School Location (City/Town REQUIRED): _____

Primary Contact Person: _____

Role or relationship of contact person to proposal: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Tel: (_____) _____ Secondary Tel: (_____) _____

Email: _____

1. The proposed school will open in the fall of school year: 2015-2016 2016-2017

School Year	Grade Levels	Total Student Enrollment
First Year		
Second Year		
Third Year		
Fourth Year		
Fifth Year		

2. Grade span at full enrollment: _____

3. Total student enrollment when fully expanded: _____

4. Age at entry for kindergarten, if applicable: _____

5. If applicable, the proposed Horace Mann charter school is: New or Conversion

6. If applicable, the proposed type of Horace Mann³ charter school is:

Horace Mann I Horace Mann II Horace Mann III

³ The revision of M.G.L. c. 71, § 89 in 2010 created three types of Horace Mann charter schools, each with a particular set of requirements.

Questions #7-10 are for applications for a Commonwealth charter school ONLY.

7. If applicable, will this proposed Commonwealth school be a regional charter school? Yes
 No

If yes, list the school districts (including regional school districts) in the proposed region. Please only list districts that are included in *District Information on Enrollment Projections for New Applications and Expansion Amendments* at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/new/>. (Use additional sheets if necessary.)

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

If no, please specify the district's population as reported in the most recent United States census estimate for the community the school intends to serve: _____.

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall not approve a new Commonwealth charter school in any community with a population of less than 30,000 as determined by the most recent United States census estimate [available at <http://www.census.gov/>], unless it is a regional charter school. (MGL c. 71 § 89(i)(1).

8. For all proposed Commonwealth charter schools, list the districts that are contiguous with the proposed school's district or region. Please only list districts that are included in *District Information on Enrollment Projections for New Applications and Expansion Amendments* at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/new/>. (Use additional sheets if necessary.)

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

9. Will the proposed Commonwealth charter school serve a district where overall student performance on the MCAS is in the lowest 10 percent, as designated in *District Information on Enrollment Projections for New Applications and Expansion Amendments* or in any updated analysis performed by the Department? Yes No

10. Will the proposed Commonwealth charter school serve a district or districts in which the 9 percent net school spending cap is, or could be, exceeded by 2014-2015 applications? Yes No

11. Have members of the applicant group previously submitted a prospectus or final application that did not result in a charter? Yes No

If yes, is the present submission related in content to the previous application? Yes No

If yes, please indicate the name of the previous proposal and the year submitted.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

13. Do members of the applicant group currently operate or are they employed by a private or parochial school? Yes No

14. Are any members of the applicant group present or past members of a charter school board of trustees (other than the one applying for the new charter), a school committee, or other type of public governing body? Yes No

If yes, please indicate the person's name; the charter school name and school location, or school committee district; and dates of membership.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Executive Summary is a required submission with the letter of intent and the charter application.

The Executive Summary should provide a broad overview of the proposed school, including its mission and school design, how this potential school will enhance options for students, the community's demonstration of support for this school, and the board of trustees' (board) capacity to make the school a success as part of a charter school network. The Executive Summary should indicate eligibility for the one stage process by indicating if the board currently holds the charter of a school that has undergone at least one successful renewal; is not under conditions or probation; is identified as Level 1 or Level 2, with school percentiles of 50 percent or higher under the Commonwealth's accountability system; and is in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations.

The Executive Summary is limited to a maximum of four pages and should include the following information, in addition:

Mission and School Design: Provide the proposed school's mission and vision. Describe the board's core beliefs and values about education. Describe the key design elements of the proposed educational program, including curriculum and instruction. Be explicit about the key design elements of the proposed school's educational program that distinguishes it from other public schools. Indicate if the proposal is a replication of the existing model or the rationale behind the new model proposed. Explain how the key design elements will support the goal of improved student outcomes.

Community (ies) to Be Served: Explain the rationale for the selection of the community(ies). Describe the educational needs of the targeted community(ies) and how the proposed school aims to address those needs. Describe the relationships that have been established in the targeted community to support the success of the proposed school. Describe the strategies used to assess demand and/or establish support for the proposed school and the progress of your efforts. Indicate the details of the proposed school growth, including proposed date of school opening, projected maximum enrollment, and the grades to be served.

Network Governance and Management: Explain how the current governance and management structure provides effective governance and leadership for the current charter school(s). Describe the board's strategic plan for an additional charter school within the context of the proposed or current network. Discuss the current school(s)' track record(s) of student and school performance, including in relation to the eligibility requirements for participation in a one stage process. Discuss evidence of organizational capacity to grow successfully while maintaining quality. Explain how the governance and management structure will evolve to support a successful charter school network.

PROVEN PROVIDER REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS FOR CURRENT BOARDS OF TRUSTEES

Current boards of trustees of a Massachusetts charter school are required to request Proven Provider status in conjunction with a new Commonwealth charter application or Commonwealth charter amendment involving changes to maximum enrollment, as applicable. Requests for Proven Provider status are required by August 1.

Charter school boards of trustees of a Massachusetts charter school must be granted Proven Provider status when requesting to increase the maximum enrollment of an existing Commonwealth charter school or to establish a new Commonwealth charter school **if** the sending region includes district(s) that have performed in the lowest 10 percent statewide for two consecutive previous years on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) **and** where the 9 percent net school spending cap *has been, or would be exceeded*.

In order to determine if a current board of trustees qualifies for Proven Provider status, the Commissioner will consider affirmative, credible evidence of the existing school's success in each of the three accountability areas: academic program success, organizational viability, and faithfulness to the terms of its charter. Pursuant to [603 CMR 1.04\(4\)](#), all applicants for Proven Provider status must submit the following data demonstrating success in student academic performance and evidence of overall academic program success:

- student proficiency levels and growth measures levels on the MCAS in English Language Arts and mathematics, for over no less than a three-year period, for all students and one or more subgroups; and
- attendance, retention, attrition, in-school suspension rates, out-of-school suspension rates, and if applicable, graduation and dropout data.

In the case of an existing charter school, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) **will not require** submission of any data readily available on the Department's website. While Proven Provider requests from current boards of trustees may submit additional evidence of the charter school(s)' success in each of the three accountability areas, **current boards of trustees are required to address any areas of concern evident in the school's performance in these three areas**. Schools should view their requests as an opportunity to advocate for themselves, provide deeper analysis of performance against Proven Provider requirements, and preempt questions that might arise during the Proven Provider process.

The board of trustees must submit a request letter signed by an individual authorized by the board, such as the board chair or school leader in addition to the evidence submitted in the Proven Provider request. The request letter should summarize the board's decision to expand through a charter application or charter amendment, provide the details of the board vote taken to authorize the request for expansion and Proven Provider status, acknowledge that the information is submitted under the penalties of perjury, and provide contact information to the Department.

The Commissioner will annually determine Proven Provider status in September for all boards of trustees requesting expansion through a charter amendment or charter application.

Please contact the Department (781-338-3227, charter_schools@doe.mass.edu) if you are unclear if the Proven Provider status requirement applies to your submission.

PROVEN PROVIDER REQUEST SUPPLEMENTAL EVIDENCE FOR CURRENT BOARDS OF TRUSTEES

While only section **IA (Student Indicators)** and **IB (Recruitment and Retention Plan)** are required, current charter school boards of trustees and school leadership are encouraged to consider submission of all supplemental evidence indicated below in support of their Proven Provider request. Please contact the Department (781-338-3227, charterschools@doe.mass.edu) with any questions regarding the submission of this information.

I. Academic Program Success:

A. [REQUIRED] Student Indicators:

The board of trustees is required to explain **trends and/or anomalies** in attendance, retention, attrition, in-school suspension rates, out-of-school suspension rates, and if applicable, graduation and dropout data over the past four years. The Department performs a review using available student data in the aggregate, and by targeted subgroups, and grade cohorts using the CHART tool. Schools should take this opportunity to explain any unique circumstances related to published school data, and corrective actions taken to address challenges in any of these areas of school performance.

Additional information may be submitted to support evidence of program success.

B. [REQUIRED] Recruitment and Retention Plan:

The board of trustees is required to discuss **effective implementation of recruitment and retention plans**. Schools should take this opportunity to describe the progress made in attracting, enrolling, and retaining a student population that is demographically comparable to similar grades in schools from which the existing charter school(s) enrolls students. Schools should describe actions taken to address challenges in any of these areas of school performance.

Additional information may be submitted to support evidence of program success.

C. [OPTIONAL] Student Performance Data:

The board of trustees may submit student performance data for **other standardized assessments** in English Language Arts and mathematics in order to demonstrate student achievement levels that are similar to statewide averages. Please indicate and define the metric used in your submission. Schools are required to submit at least three years of data for all students and one or more targeted subgroups⁴. Targeted subgroups may include, but are not limited to:

- students that require special education services (students with disabilities, SWD);
- students who qualify for free and/or reduced lunch (low-income); and
- students with limited English-proficiency (English language learners, ELL).

If the number of students in one or more targeted subgroups is below the threshold of students required for reporting based on the metric⁵, schools may include a high needs⁶ student subgroup where student data is aggregated into a 'super' subgroup of students with high needs adjusted for enrollment.

Additional information may be submitted to support evidence of student achievement and growth.

⁴ If available, the submission should include comparative performance data, national, statewide, or district(s), for all students and for one or more targeted subgroups in comparable grades.

⁵ For example, the Department does not report MCAS *achievement percentages* for subgroups with fewer than 10 students included, or MCAS *growth percentiles* for subgroups with fewer than 20 students included.

⁶ A student is *high needs* if he or she is designated as either low income, or ELL, or former ELL, or a student with disabilities. A former ELL student is a student not currently an ELL, but had been at some point in the two previous academic years.

II. Organizational Viability:

A. [OPTIONAL] Effective Governance:

The board of trustees may submit a summary of board activities that demonstrate effective governance, as well as compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The summary may include specific achievements over the most recent charter term; analyses of stakeholder satisfaction surveys; school leadership evaluations; and board of trustees self-evaluation.

B. [OPTIONAL] Financial Management:

The board of trustees may submit a summary of board activities that demonstrate effective financial management, as well as compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The summary may include information regarding real estate acquisition, loan agreements and debt repayment, and fundraising, as applicable.

COMMONWEALTH CHARTER SCHOOL CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Proposed Charter School Name: _____

Proposed School Location (City/Town): _____

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and that this application has been or is being sent to the superintendent of each of the districts from which we expect to draw students and from any contiguous districts. Further, I understand that, if awarded a charter, the proposed school shall be open to all students on a space available basis, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or academic achievement. I further understand that the information submitted in this application serves as an initial application for start-up assistance funding under the federal Charter Schools Program grant. This is a true statement, made under the penalties of perjury.

Signature of
Authorized Person _____ Date _____

Print/Type Name _____

Address _____

Daytime Phone _____ Fax _____

HORACE MANN I CHARTER SCHOOL CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Proposed Charter School Name _____

School's Current Name
(If different from above) _____

School Address _____ City/Town _____

I hereby certify that this prospectus/application has received approval from a majority of the school committee and from the local teacher's union in the district in which this Horace Mann I Charter School would be located. The information submitted in this prospectus/application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and further, I understand that, if awarded a charter, the proposed charter school shall be open to all students, on a space available basis, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or academic achievement. I understand that the final application for the proposed school shall include a signed final draft memorandum of understanding that describes the intended relationship between the proposed charter school and the school district. I also understand that any memorandum of understanding, modifying provisions of a collective bargaining agreement must be signed by the proposed charter school, the school committee, and the local collective bargaining unit and submitted with the final application. I further understand that the information submitted in this prospectus/application serves as an initial application for start-up assistance funding under the federal Charter Schools Program grant. This is a true statement, made under the penalties of perjury.

I. School Committee

Signature _____ Date _____
Chairperson, School Committee

Print/Type Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Telephone _____ Fax _____

II. Local Collective Bargaining Unit

Signature _____ Date _____
President, Local Teacher's Union

Print/Type Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Telephone _____ Fax _____

HORACE MANN II CHARTER SCHOOL CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Proposed Charter School Name _____

School's Current Name
(If different from above) _____

School Address _____ City/Town _____

I hereby certify that this prospectus/application has received approval from a majority of the school committee. The information submitted in this prospectus/application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and further, I understand that, if awarded a charter, the proposed charter school shall be open to all students, on a space available basis, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or academic achievement. I understand that the final application for the proposed school shall include a signed final draft memorandum of understanding that describes the intended relationship between the proposed charter school and the school district. I also understand that any memorandum of understanding, modifying provisions of a collective bargaining agreement must be approved by a majority of faculty at the school, with the vote to be held within 30 days of submission of application. I further understand that the information submitted in this prospectus/application serves as an initial application for start-up assistance funding under the federal Charter Schools Program grant. This is a true statement, made under the penalties of perjury.

I. School Committee

Signature _____ Date _____
Chairperson, School Committee

Print/Type Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Telephone _____ Fax _____

HORACE MANN III CHARTER SCHOOL CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Proposed Charter School Name _____

School's Current Name
(If different from above) _____

School Address _____ City/Town _____

I hereby certify that this prospectus/application has received approval from a majority of the school committee. The information submitted in this prospectus/application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and further, I understand that, if awarded a charter, the proposed charter school shall be open to all students, on a space available basis, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or academic achievement. I understand that the final application for the proposed school shall include a signed final draft memorandum of understanding that describes the intended relationship between the proposed charter school and the school district. I also understand that an agreement with the collective bargaining unit is not required prior to Board approval of a charter, however the charter school's board of trustees must negotiate with the collective bargaining unit and the school committee in good faith regarding any modifications to collective bargaining agreements following the award of a charter. If an agreement is not reached at least 30 days before scheduled opening, charter school operates under the terms of its charter until an agreement is reached. I further understand that the information submitted in this prospectus/application serves as an initial application for start-up assistance funding under the federal Charter Schools Program grant. This is a true statement, made under the penalties of perjury.

I. School Committee

Signature _____ Date _____
Chairperson, School Committee

Print/Type Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Telephone _____ Fax _____

GENERAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

This form must be signed by a duly authorized representative of the applicant group and submitted with the final application. An application will be considered incomplete and will not be accepted if it does not include the Statement of Assurances.

As the authorized representative of the applicant group, I hereby certify under the penalties of perjury that the information submitted in this application for a charter for _____ (name of school) to be located at _____ is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and further, I certify that, if awarded a charter, the school:

1. Will not charge tuition, fees, or other mandatory payments for attendance at the charter school, for participation in required or elective courses, or for mandated services or programs (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(m), and 603 CMR 1.03(3)).
2. Will not charge any public school for the use or replication of any part of their curriculum subject to the prescriptions of any contract between the charter school and any third party provider (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(l)).
3. Will permit parents to enroll their children only voluntarily and not because they must send their children to this school (The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, Title V, Part B, Subpart 1 — Public Charter Schools Section 5210(1)(h)).
4. Will enroll any eligible student who submits a timely and complete application, unless the school receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students. If the number of application exceeds the spaces available, the school will hold a lottery in accordance with Massachusetts charter laws and regulations (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71 § 89(n), and 603 CMR 1.05).
5. Will be open to all students, on a space available basis, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or academic achievement (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(m)).
6. Will be secular in its curriculum, programs, admissions, policies, governance, employment practices, and operation in accordance with the federal and state constitutions and any other relevant provisions of federal and state law.
7. Will comply with the federal Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.
8. Will adhere to all applicable provisions of federal and state law relating to students with disabilities including, but not limited to, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws.
9. Will adhere to all applicable provisions of federal and state law relating to students who are English language learners including, but not limited to, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, and chapter 71A of the Massachusetts General Laws.
10. Will comply with all other applicable federal and state law including, but not limited to, the requirement to offer a school nutrition program (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 69, § 1 (c)).

11. Will meet the performance standards and assessment requirements set by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for all students in public schools including, but not limited to, administering the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(v), and 603 CMR 1.04(3)(k)).
12. Will submit an annual report to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on or before the required deadline (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71 § 89(jj)).
13. Will submit an accountability plan no later than the end of the first year of the school's charter, establishing specific five year performance objectives as specified in the state regulations (603 CMR 1.04 (3)(l)) and guidelines.
14. Will submit an annual independent audit to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Office of the State Auditor no later than November 1st of every year, as required by the charter school statute (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(jj)), or at such other time as designated in 603 CMR 1.08 (3)).
15. Will submit required enrollment data each March to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education by the required deadline (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(o), and 603 CMR 1.08(5)).
16. Will meet enrollment projections through demonstration of support for the proposed charter school in the communities from which students would be likely to enroll (603 CMR 1.04(3)(c)).
17. Will operate in compliance with generally accepted government accounting principles (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(jj)).
18. Will maintain financial records to meet the requirements of Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89 and 603 CMR 1.00.
19. Will participate in the Massachusetts State Teachers' Retirement System (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(y)).
20. Will employ individuals who either hold an appropriate license to teach in a public school in Massachusetts or who will take and pass the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) within their first year of employment and meet all applicable staff requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71 § 89(ii), and 603 CMR 1.06(4)).
21. Will provide the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education with written assurance that a criminal background check has been performed, prior to their employment, on all employees of the school who will have unsupervised contact with children (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 38R, and 603 CMR 1.04(7)(d)).
22. Will obtain and keep current all necessary permits, licenses, and certifications related to fire, health, and safety within the building(s) and on school property (603 CMR 1.04(7)(e), 1.04(7)(f), 1.05(7)(g), and 1.05(7)(h)).
23. Will maintain uninterrupted necessary and appropriate insurance coverage (603 CMR 1.04(7)(h)).
24. Will submit to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education the names, home addresses, and employment and educational histories of proposed new members of the school's board of trustees for approval prior to their service (603 CMR 1.06(1)(b)).

25. Will ensure that every member of the school's board of trustees shall meet all training as required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and any other requirements by other state agencies, including the requirements under the Commonwealth's open meeting law and conflict of interest law (603 CMR 1.06).
26. Will ensure that all members of the school's board of trustees file with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the State Ethics Commission, and the city or town clerk where the charter school is located completed financial disclosure forms for the preceding calendar year according to the schedule required by the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(u)). The disclosure is in addition to the requirements of said chapter 268A and a member of a board of trustees must also comply with the disclosure and other requirements of said chapter 268A.
27. Will recognize, if applicable, an employee organization designated by the authorization cards of 50 percent of its employees in the appropriate bargaining unit as the exclusive representative of all the employees in such unit for the purpose of collective bargaining (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(y)).
28. Will provide the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education with a federal taxpayer identification number issued solely to the charter school and all required information regarding a bank account held solely in the name of the charter school (603 CMR 1.04(8)).
29. Will, in the event the board of trustees intends to procure substantially all educational services for the charter school through a contract with another person or entity, submit such contract for approval by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to provide for any necessary revisions and approval prior to the beginning of the contract period (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(k)(5)).
30. Will notify the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education immediately in writing of any change in circumstances that may have a significant impact on the school's ability to fulfill its goals or missions as stated in its charter (603 CMR 1.08(11)).
31. Will submit in writing to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education a request to amend its charter if the school plans to make a change to its operations as defined in 603 CMR 1.10.

Signature

Date

Affiliation

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES FOR THE FEDERAL CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM GRANT

These additional assurances are required to ensure compliance with requirements for the federal Charter Schools Program grant:

1. Will annually provide the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education such information as may be required to determine if the charter school is making satisfactory progress toward achieving objectives described in this application (The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, Title V, Part B, Subpart 1 — Public Charter Schools Section 5203(b)(3)).
2. Will cooperate with the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in evaluating the program described in the application (The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, Title V, Part B, Subpart 1 — Public Charter Schools Section 5203(b)(3)).
3. Will provide other information and assurances as the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education may require (The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, Title V, Part B, Subpart 1 — Public Charter Schools Section 5203(b)(3)).

Signature

Date

Affiliation

COMMONWEALTH AND HORACE MANN CHARTER APPLICATION OUTLINE FOR CURRENT BOARDS OF TRUSTEES

A final application is limited to 75 pages of text and 40 pages of specifically required and optional attachments

- Cover Page
- Applicant Information Sheet
- Certification Statement
- General Statement of Assurances –Application for a Massachusetts Commonwealth Public Charter School
- Statement of Assurances – Federal Charter School Program Grant
- Executive Summary – no more than four pages
The Executive Summary should provide a broad overview of the proposed school, including its mission and school design, how this potential school will enhance options for students, the community’s demonstration of support for this school, and the board of trustees’ capacity to make the school a success as part of a charter school network.

I. How will the school demonstrate faithfulness to charter?

- A. Mission
- B. Key Design Elements
- C. Description of the Community(ies) to be Served
- D. Enrollment and Recruitment

II. How will the school demonstrate academic success?

- A. Overview of Program Delivery
- B. Curriculum and Instruction
- C. Student Performance, Assessment, and Program Evaluation
- D. Supports for Diverse Learners
- E. Culture and Family Engagement

III. How will the school demonstrate organizational viability?

- A. Capacity
- B. Governance
- C. Management
- D. Facilities and Student Transportation
- E. School Finances
- F. Action Plan

IV. Required Attachments counted toward 40 page maximum:

All applications must contain:

- Current Bylaws
- Draft Recruitment and Retention Plan for Proposed School
- Draft Enrollment Policy and Admission Application for Proposed School
- Draft School Calendar for Proposed School
- Draft Organizational Charts – Proposed School and Network

- Operating Budget: Projected Revenues and Expenditures; and Cash Flow Projection. (use electronic budget template, available on the Department website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/new/?section=app> and <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/app/budgettemplate.xls>.)

V. Required Attachments not counted toward 40 page maximum:

- Individual resumes from each applicant group member, indicating if an individual is a current board member, current employee of the board, proposed school leader, or proposed for any other position(s).
- Description of curriculum scope and sequence for grade levels beyond those required in the text of the application, including the content and skills to be taught in the core content areas.
- Draft management or EMO contract, for proven provider and non-proven provider applicants (if applicable).
- School Improvement Plan for Horace Mann II (conversion) schools only.
- Memoranda of Understanding, Type A and Type B (as applicable).

Optional:

The choice of non-required attachments is determined by the applicant group, although attachments should only be used to provide additional evidence, support a particular aspect of the application, or lend insight into the applicant group.

COMMONWEALTH AND HORACE MANN CHARTER APPLICATION FOR CURRENT CHARTER SCHOOL BOARDS OF TRUSTEES

Due November 5, 2014

I. HOW WILL THE SCHOOL DEMONSTRATE FAITHFULNESS TO CHARTER?

A. MISSION

The mission communicates the essence of the proposed charter school and defines the core purpose and key values of the school to its stakeholders and the public. It should be succinct and meaningful and consistent with high academic standards. A school's mission statement provides the foundation for the entire charter application and for the five year term of the school's charter. The mission should be reflected throughout all sections of the final application.

Provide the mission statement. The mission and application should address the following criteria:

- ✓ The mission defines the purpose and specialized focus of the school to its stakeholders and the public.
- ✓ The mission speaks to the value of the school, based on its own merit, and communicates the applicant group's core beliefs and values about education.
- ✓ The mission indicates the key design elements proposed to achieve outcomes.
- ✓ The mission is consistent with high academic standards and student success.
- ✓ The mission is succinct and comprehensible.
- ✓ The mission is reflected throughout all sections of the application.
- ✓ The application indicates whether the proposed mission is different from the existing school's mission and how it differs. Describe the reasoning behind any modifications. If a **Horace Mann II (conversion) charter school**, the response should indicate both the mission of the district school proposed for conversion, and the existing charter school governed by the board of trustees.

B. KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

The application must contain a clear description of the key design elements of the proposed school that make the school unique and distinct from other public school options, and provide readers with an image of the future the applicant group wishes to create. The key design elements must align with the mission and be reflected throughout the application. This section of the application should further articulate what the school will achieve for the school community—students, parents, teachers, board members, and beyond.

When describing the key design elements, the application should address the following criteria:

- ✓ The application briefly describes the educational philosophy of the applicant group and their core beliefs and values about education which aligns with the school's mission and key design elements.
- ✓ The application describes the key design elements of the proposed school, such as length of school year and day, and aspects of school design, that make the school unique and distinct from other public school options. The key design elements align with the mission statement, and are reflected throughout all sections of the application.
- ✓ The application describes the key academic and nonacademic goals for students that are consistent with the stated mission, key design elements of the academic program, and educational philosophy of the school. Goals should be specific; measurable; action oriented; rigorous, realistic, and results focused objectives that are time-bound and tracked.
- ✓ The application describes how this school will enhance or expand the educational options, including whether the innovative methods to be used by the proposed school differ from the district or districts from which the charter school is expected to enroll students.
- ✓ The application illustrates a compelling image of the school's future and what the school will look like in five years if it is achieving its mission. Explicitly reference key pieces of evidence to demonstrate

how the school's success will be measured, including the ways in which the school will positively impact all stakeholders in the school.

Additional criterion for Horace Mann II (conversion) applicants:

- ✓ The application describes the process the applicant group and proposed board of trustees will use to make these changes and support successful implementation.

C. DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY(IES) TO BE SERVED

State law asserts that charter schools are to be established to 1) stimulate the development of innovative programs within public education; 2) provide opportunities for innovative learning and assessments; 3) provide parents and students with greater options in choosing schools within and outside their school districts; 4) provide teachers with a vehicle for establishing schools with alternative, innovative methods of educational instruction and school structure and management; 5) encourage performance-based educational programs; 6) hold teachers and school administrators accountable for students' educational outcomes; and 7) provide models for replication in other public schools.

The application should describe the community(ies) to be served by the school and how the school will offer educational opportunity to students, including meeting the identified needs of students and their families. These are essential factors that inform the design of a successful charter school, ultimately driving support for and enrollment in the school. Data on district performance on the MCAS is available on the Department's website and does not need to be reiterated here.

When describing the community(ies) the school plans to serve, the application should address the following criteria:

- ✓ The application describes the student population that the proposed charter school would serve and the needs of that population.
- ✓ The application discusses the reason for the selection of the community(ies) and the applicant's ability to serve this particular area and current connections to the community.
- ✓ The application describes how the educational option provided by the charter school will address the needs of the student population, including the proposed mission, curriculum, instruction, and services.
- ✓ The application describes how the applicant group has assessed parental support within the proposed sending district(s)/region for the proposed school.
- ✓ In the case of a **Horace Mann charter school**, the application provides a description of how the applicant group has assessed parental, district, teacher, and other staff support within the proposed sending district for the proposed school.
- ✓ The application describes supporting evidence for the projected student enrollment at the proposed **Commonwealth charter school**, such as an analysis of eligible potential students in the community(ies) to be served, analysis of documented demand from families with eligible potential students, and/or an analysis of enrollment at schools currently operating in the community(ies) to be served. Applicants should not submit copies of petitions or interest forms in the charter application.
- ✓ The application describes how the school will publicize and market its program to a broad cross-section of prospective students throughout the district(s) that the school plans to serve, including families that may be less informed about options. The application discusses specific strategies of how the proposed school will ensure adequate enrollment and full access to the school and its proposed educational program for all eligible students.
- ✓ The application describes the school's plan to provide families and community members opportunities to support the success of the school.
- ✓ The application explains why a **Commonwealth or Horace Mann charter** is necessary in order for this school to exist or succeed.

- ✓ The application discusses specific ways in which the **Commonwealth charter school** will collaborate with school districts from which it draws students to provide educational models, including programs, curriculum, and teaching methods that can be replicated by other public schools.
- ✓ The application discusses specific ways in which the **Horace Mann charter school** will collaborate with schools within the district to provide educational models, including programs, curriculum, and teaching methods that can be replicated by other public schools.

Additional criterion for Horace Mann II (conversion) applicants:

- ✓ The application summarizes the School Improvement Plan currently in use including: data used, problem(s) identified, implementation status, and description of what has worked, what has not worked, and why. The application describes what the applicant group perceives as roadblocks to the successful implementation or inadequacies of the current School Improvement Plan.
- ✓ The application provides an analysis of the external and internal factors, strengths, and/or needs that moved the applicant group to propose a Horace Mann charter school.
- ✓ The application explains how this information has informed what the applicant group is proposing and how becoming a Horace Mann charter school will lead to greater academic success for students.

D. ENROLLMENT AND RECRUITMENT

Charter schools are public schools and are therefore open to all students. This means that a charter school may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or in a foreign language, or prior academic achievement when recruiting or admitting students. Moreover, a charter school may not set admissions criteria that are intended to discriminate or that have the effect of discriminating based upon any of these characteristics.

All Massachusetts charter schools are required to have a student recruitment and retention plan that includes deliberate, specific strategies the school will use to attract, enroll, and retain a student population that, when compared to students in similar grades in schools from which the charter school enrolls students, contains a comparable demographic and academic profile. The plan must include strategies for recruiting and retaining students including, limited English-proficient, special education, free lunch, and reduced price lunch students, as well as those who are sub-proficient on the MCAS, at risk of dropping out of school, have dropped out of school, or other at risk students who should be targeted to eliminate achievement gaps.

When preparing the enrollment and recruitment section of the application, the application should address the following criteria:

- ✓ The application indicates in a table the projected number of students to be enrolled by grade each year over the five year term of the charter, as well as the overall maximum enrollment requested. Explain in detail your rationale for selecting the particular enrollment size for your school as well as the growth strategy you have developed. In your projection, indicate clearly the potential for variation in enrollment year-to-year that reflects an understanding of potential student retention and attrition within your growth plan. Inclusion of projected maximum and minimum annual levels of student enrollment will safeguard against the need for a future minor amendment to your growth plan, if chartered.
- ✓ The application includes a draft of the proposed recruitment and retention plan as an attachment. The plan should clearly incorporate strategies that will attract, enroll, and retain a student population that has a comparable academic and demographic profile when compared to students in similar grades in schools from which the charter school is expected to enroll students.
- ✓ The application describes the grade levels at which students will be admitted to the school and the required age for kindergarten admission, if applicable.
- ✓ The application contains a complete draft enrollment policy and application for admission as an attachment. Indicate dates for the application period, including application and lottery deadlines.

II. HOW WILL THE SCHOOL DEMONSTRATE ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

A. OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM DELIVERY

All Massachusetts charter schools are expected to deliver academic programs that provide improved academic outcomes and educational success for all students. The proposed educational program should address the diverse needs of the student population and should be founded on an understanding of effective, research-based educational practices and high standards for student learning. The proposed school should incorporate a pedagogical approach, curriculum, assessment, culture, and other elements, based on the applicant group's educational philosophy, that create a comprehensive educational program. The overview of program delivery describes how the educational program will be delivered, and provides evidence that the proposed educational program and its associated educational practices may result in high academic achievement and the attainment of the knowledge, skills, and experiences that ensures college and career readiness for the anticipated student population.

When describing the school's program delivery, the application should address the following criteria:

- ✓ The application demonstrates that the proposed educational program will serve the diverse needs of individual students by providing evidence, including **explicit research citations**, that demonstrates their educational program and its associated educational practices may result in high academic achievement and the attainment of the knowledge, skills, and experiences that ensures college and career readiness for the anticipated student population. Evidence should include the specific subgroups of students listed in the recruitment and retention plan consistent with requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 89, such as students with disabilities, English language learners, and students participating in the federal free/reduced lunch nutrition program.
- ✓ The application describes the school calendar including the number of days school will be in session; and the daily hours of operation, including the length of the school day with start and dismissal times. Please be specific in describing these items and pay attention to the state requirements on minimum number of school days and instructional hours as described in 603 CMR 27.00, which is available online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr27.html>. If the school would not meet the minimum number of school days and instructional hours based on the program proposed, provide justification for a waiver of the requirement. All public schools may request from the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education a waiver of student learning time for good cause to support innovative programs or schedules to improve student learning.
- ✓ The application provides an annual calendar for the first year of operation as an attachment to your application. Draft calendar should reflect the required inclusion of five days within the school year for unanticipated school closures pursuant to 603 CMR 27.03.
- ✓ The application provides a sample weekly schedule for one grade in each grade level grouping at which the school intends to serve (e.g., elementary, middle, high school, or early, primary, upper elementary, etc.).
- ✓ The application provides a description of the mechanics of the educational program in terms of the daily or weekly organization of students and faculty (e.g., multi-grade, tracking, team-teaching, etc.) to explain the sample schedule.
- ✓ The application indicates if mandatory or optional programming will be offered to students during summer months, and the goals of such programming if offered.
- ✓ The application describes the extra or co-curricular activities or programming that the school will offer, how often they will occur, and the goals of such programming if offered.
- ✓ In the case of a **Horace Mann charter school**, the application describes the proposed school's ability, if any, to access programs offered by the district, including arts or sports programs.
- ✓ The application illustrates a typical day from the perspective of a student in a grade level of your choice.
- ✓ The application illustrates a typical day from the perspective of a teacher of any subject or grade of your choice.

Additional criterion for Horace Mann II (conversion) applicants:

- ✓ The application indicates whether the proposed educational program delivery is different from the existing school’s educational program delivery and how it differs.
- ✓ The application describes any proposed changes in expectations for staff related to program delivery, such as length of school year and day.
- ✓ The application describes the process the applicant group and proposed board of trustees will use to make these changes and support successful implementation.

B. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Charter schools have the freedom to choose and/or develop curriculum models that best reflect the mission and educational philosophy of the school and that best serve the needs of the anticipated student population. Regardless of whether curriculum is purchased or internally developed, it is important that it aligns with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCF) since the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is based on the learning standards outlined in the MCF. Additional information about the MCF can be found online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/>. Charter schools also have the freedom to determine the instructional methods that will be used to deliver the chosen curriculum model(s).

When describing the school’s curriculum and instruction, the application should address the following criteria as applicable:

- ✓ The application demonstrates that the proposed curriculum and instruction will serve the diverse needs of individual students by providing evidence or relevant experience, including **explicit research citations**, that demonstrates the proposed curriculum and instruction may result in high academic achievement and the attainment of the knowledge, skills, and experiences that ensures college and career readiness for the anticipated student population. Evidence should include the specific subgroups of students listed in the recruitment and retention plan consistent with requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 89, such as students with disabilities, English language learners, and students participating in the federal free/reduced lunch nutrition program.
- ✓ The application contains the curriculum scope and sequence that will be used by the school, including the content and skills to be taught in the core content areas at each grade level.⁷ Four grade levels should be included in the text of the application. All additional grade levels must be included in the attachments, but will not be counted toward the page limit. For proposed schools that plan to have fewer than four grade levels, please include all of the intended grades in the application narrative. The curriculum scope and sequence should be clearly aligned with MCF as well as aligned across the grades proposed for implementation.
- ✓ If applicable, the application describes how the existing school’s resources, both protocols and personnel, will be used to support the development of the curriculum and instruction of the proposed educational program.
- ✓ The application contains a detailed plan for a responsive general education classroom that would support the needs of all students. The plan should include how the proposed curriculum and instructional methods will support high standards of achievement for students with a wide range of needs, and be accessible and appropriate for all students at all levels, including students with diverse learning styles; English language learners; students with disabilities; students who enter below grade level, or students identified as at risk; and advanced students who perform significantly above grade

⁷ Content is what students should know; skills are what students should be able to do; and the core content areas include English, reading/language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.

level. The plan should also describe the strategies the school will implement to ensure academic success for all students, including students struggling to meet performance standards.

<p>Use of Existing School's Curriculum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The application indicates if the school will implement curriculum currently used by the existing charter school or if modifications will be made. ✓ The application describes the process that is used to ensure alignment of the curriculum to the MCF and identifies the individual(s) on the school's organizational chart who will be responsible for curriculum alignment to the MCF. ✓ If modifications to the curriculum will be required, the application explains the process utilized to identify areas for revision and to make adjustments. Indicate the individual(s) that will be responsible for the process. ✓ If proposing to establish a school in a different municipality or targeting a different student population than served by the current school, the application describes the curriculum planning and preparations for meeting the needs of the anticipated student population. Indicate the individual(s) that will be responsible for the process.
<p>New Curriculum Required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The application indicates if the school will implement commercially available and/or internally developed curriculum. ✓ If intending to use developed curriculum, the application explains the process utilized to identify the curriculum that will be used by the school and provide reasons why the curriculum was chosen for the school. Identify which individual(s) in the school's organizational chart will be responsible for identifying and selecting curriculum. ✓ If intending to develop curriculum, the application explains the process that will be used by the school to develop curriculum. Identify which individual(s) will be responsible for developing curriculum and who will participate in the process. ✓ The application describes the process that is used to ensure alignment of the curriculum to the MCF and identifies the individual(s) who will be responsible for curriculum alignment to the MCF.

- ✓ The application describes the processes for the ongoing development, improvement, and refinement of the curriculum. The description should include incorporation of the curricular structures that are used by the school, e.g. scope and sequence, unit and lesson plans, etc. Identify which individual(s) on the school's organizational chart will be responsible for, and participate in the development, improvement, and refinement of the curriculum.
- ✓ The application describes the process and procedures used to evaluate whether the curriculum is effective and successfully implemented. Identify which individual(s) on the school's organizational chart will be responsible for curriculum evaluation.
- ✓ The application describes the learning environment(s) used to deliver the proposed curriculum model, including the use of technology, and class size and structure.
- ✓ The application describes the pedagogy or instructional methods that will be used to deliver the curriculum model(s).
- ✓ The application describes the proposed structures for regular, frequent collaboration and professional development to improve implementation of the curriculum and instructional practice. Include a description of how the school plans to train and support teachers to address the unique needs of all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners.

- ✓ The application describes how the school will determine the professional development needs of the staff, including administrators and teachers, on an on-going basis and how these opportunities will be delivered during and outside of the scheduled school year.
- ✓ The application explains the process and frequency of teacher performance evaluations, including the key elements of the evaluation and who will conduct the evaluations. For more information about educator evaluation in Massachusetts see: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/>.

Additional criterion for Horace Mann II (conversion) applicants:

- ✓ The application indicates whether the proposed curriculum and instruction is different from the existing school’s curriculum and instruction and how it differs.
- ✓ The application describes the process the applicant group and proposed board of trustees will use to make these changes and support successful implementation.

C. STUDENT PERFORMANCE, ASSESSMENT, AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

Charter schools must assure that students will meet the same performance standards and assessment requirements set by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for students in other public schools. Performance, promotion, and graduation standards should be based on high expectations that are aligned with the school’s mission, educational program, assessment system, and the MCF. An integrated assessment system, which includes the MCAS test, serves as a structure for how teachers and administrators will measure what students know and are able to do as a result of the delivery of curriculum and instruction.

Information from assessments serves to help determine what areas of instruction need additional time, the needs of individual students, the quality of instruction, decisions on improvement strategies, and the school’s overall progress in meeting Accountability Plan goals. Ultimately, the assessment system provides information to all stakeholders on whether the school is an academic success. The proposed system should reflect how the school would link curriculum and instruction to assessment by measuring the academic progress of individual students, cohorts of students over time, and the school as a whole, with the goal of continual school improvement.

When describing student performance, assessment, and program evaluation, the application should address the following criteria:

- ✓ The application describes the proposed school’s policies and standards for promoting students to the next grade, achievement level, or grouping level in alignment with the educational program.
- ✓ The application describes the graduation requirements or “exit standards” for the school’s grade groupings as applicable (e.g., elementary, middle, high school, or primary, upper elementary, etc.). These exit standards should be aligned with the school’s mission and provide a clear sense of expected student achievement at the end of the last grade of each school level and/or upon graduation. If the proposed educational program includes a high school, explain how your graduation requirements will ensure student readiness for college and career opportunities.
- ✓ The application describes a thorough, clear, measurable, externally credible, and conceptually sound design for measuring and reporting the performance and progress of the school as a whole, student cohorts over time, and the academic and social development of each student to all relevant stakeholders. Selected assessments are both research based and consistent with the school’s mission, broad academic and nonacademic student goals, educational program, and high expectations of students. Descriptions should include, but are not limited to, the following information:
 - The types of internal/school-developed assessments that will be administered to measure and report student progress. Explain why these particular assessments were selected for the targeted student population and how the data will be used to support the goal of improved student learning and outcomes.

- Describe the school’s philosophy and plans for student homework.
- A meaningful and practical approach for measuring and supporting student progress toward attaining non-academic goals in alignment with the proposed school’s mission and vision as well as students’ needs.
- Evidence of multiple measures of student performance outcomes that may include reports of absolute scores, within-year student gains/losses, and year-to-year student gains/losses.
- A plan to use student data, including MCAS performance, to facilitate decision-making about necessary adjustments to the educational program and the staff development plan that will support the goal of improved student learning and outcomes.
- Indicate if any additional standardized assessment tools will be used to determine and report student progress. If so, explain why those tools were selected for the targeted population and how the data will be used.
- Indicate the roles of school leadership and faculty in the collection, analysis, and use of student data, and the individual responsible for oversight of the system.
- Indicate the system for reporting the performance and progress of the school, grades, individual classes, and students, including the frequency of the different forms of assessment, the types of stakeholders who will receive assessment information, and the types of metrics reported.
- ✓ The application describes the processes that will ensure the assessment system is linked to curriculum and instruction, and is used to facilitate timely adjustments that will support the goal of improved student learning and outcomes.
- ✓ The application describes how each of the following stakeholder groups will participate in the review and response to student achievement data:
 - The school’s board of trustees
 - School administrators
 - Teachers
 - Students
 - Parents
- ✓ The application briefly describes the process to create an effective accountability plan⁸ during the first year of operation. The application identifies who will be primarily responsible for defining and overseeing this process, as well as for collecting and analyzing the data to evaluate the school’s progress towards accountability plan objectives and measures.
- ✓ The application contains draft objectives and measures related to mission and key design elements as an attachment. Review the Guidelines for Writing Charter School Accountability Plans at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/acct.html?section=guidelines> for additional information.

Additional criterion for Horace Mann II (conversion) applicants:

- ✓ The application indicates whether the proposed standards for student performance, promotion, and graduation and the proposed assessment system is different from the existing school’s standards and assessment system and how it differs.
- ✓ The application describes the process the applicant group and proposed board of trustees will use to make these changes and support successful implementation.

⁸ The *Guidelines for Writing Charter School Accountability Plans* may be found online at http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/guides/acctplan_guidelines.pdf.

D. SUPPORTS FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

All charter schools in Massachusetts are public schools that enroll students through a lottery process. Therefore, all charter schools must be prepared to enroll students with diverse learning needs including English language learners and students with disabilities, all of whom must be provided with full and meaningful access to the general educational curriculum.

The general education classroom needs to be responsive to the educational needs of all children, and accommodates their needs. A full continuum of services must be available within the school so that all students can receive needed services in an appropriate setting and participate fully in the educational goals and mission of the school. This section of the application should describe the school's programs and services, and how they will be implemented within the context of your proposed school.

For information on special education, please see the Massachusetts Primer on Special Education and Charter Schools and related documents found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/sped/default.html>. For information on special education laws and regulations see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/laws.html>.

For information on the laws and regulations relating to English language learners, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr14.html>. For guidance on English language learners, please see the Department's website at http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/guidance_laws.html. Please review the [Opening Procedures Handbook](#)⁹ for the required elements of the English language education policies and procedures submitted to the Department during opening procedures of the proposed charter school.

When describing the school's plan for special student populations, the application should address the following criteria:

- ✓ The application describes the processes and procedures that the proposed school will employ to **identify, assess, and serve students** who are English language learners. In the case of a **Horace Mann charter school**, indicate what role, if any, the district will have in the assessment and delivery of services. Descriptions will be considered incomplete if they do not include:
 - a description of the English language development program and support services to be offered including the curriculum and strategies that will be used;
 - how student identification and assessment will be conducted;
 - the settings in which required services will be implemented;
 - how services will be delivered within the school's daily schedule;
 - the plan to support core academic teachers in obtaining SEI endorsement;
 - the titles, salaries, and qualifications of the individuals delivering the services; and
 - how the program will be evaluated.
- ✓ The application describes the English language development program **staffing levels** the school intends to provide by year for each of your school's first five years. Include qualified individuals who will work with your school, administrators, teachers, and other staff, as well as the number of staff you propose to hire each year and their qualifications, salary, and the percentage of their time that will be devoted to English language learner education.
- ✓ The application describes the processes and procedures that the proposed school will employ to **identify, assess, and provide specialized instruction** to each student in need of special education services. In the case of a **Horace Mann charter school**, indicate what role, if any, the district will have in the assessment and delivery of services. Descriptions will be considered incomplete if they do not include:

⁹ The Opening Procedures Handbook is an essential resource for new boards of trustees and charter school leaders to successfully complete the requirements prior to opening as a public charter school.

- a description of support services to be offered and some of the methods that will be used to provide a continuum of services;
 - how student identification and assessment will be conducted;
 - the development of individualized education programs;
 - the settings in which required services will be delivered;
 - how services for students in need of special education services will be delivered within the school's daily schedule;
 - the qualifications of individuals who will be recruited to deliver services;
 - the titles, salaries, and qualifications of each position proposed; and
 - how the program will be evaluated.
- ✓ The application describes the special education **staffing levels** the school intends to provide by year for each of your school's first five years. Include the Special Education Administrator who will work with your school, teachers, aides, and other staff, as well as the number of staff you propose to hire each year and their qualifications, salary, and the percentage of their time that will be devoted to special education. Specify the amounts of time the administrator will allocate to administrative duties and to service delivery. Indicate if you anticipate outsourcing services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, or speech therapy and if possible, with whom you anticipate contracting for the provision of services.
 - ✓ In the case of a **Horace Mann charter school**, the application indicates clearly the expectations surrounding district involvement in the provision of services for students with disabilities and English language learners.

Additional criterion for Horace Mann II (conversion) applicants:

- ✓ The application indicates whether the proposed plans for special education programming and English language development programming is different from the existing school's programs and how it differs.
- ✓ The application provides an analysis of the existing school's current efforts serving students receiving special education services and English language learners and how the proposed programming addresses identified areas for improvement.
- ✓ The application describes the process the applicant group and proposed board of trustees will use to make these changes and support successful implementation.

E. CULTURE AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Massachusetts charter schools support students' social and emotional health in safe and respectful learning environments that engages families. The application must describe how the proposed school will create a safe school environment and address the physical, social, emotional, and health needs of its anticipated student population. The application must also describe how the proposed school will develop strong working relationships with families/guardians in order to support students' academic progress and social and emotional well-being.

When describing the school's plan for school culture and parent engagement, the application should address the following criteria:

- ✓ The application describes the culture of the school, and a clear plan for establishing a school culture and norms consistent with the school's mission, educational philosophy, and educational program from the first day of the school's operation. The plan should include specific strategies the school will implement to develop and maintain a safe school environment conducive to learning and consistent with the school's mission and educational philosophy. Describe how school culture and climate will be fostered for and by school leadership, teachers, students, and parents.
- ✓ The application describes the school's programs or strategies to address the physical, social, emotional, and health needs of the anticipated student population.

- ✓ The application describes the school's philosophy and plans regarding student behavior and discipline for the general student population and students with special needs. Describe proposed policies regarding student discipline, including suspension and expulsion, or a reasonable plan for the development of the required discipline policies. Student discipline should be consistent with requirements and the school's mission and educational philosophy.
- ✓ The application describes how the school's discipline policy will be implemented for teachers, students, and parents starting from the first day of the school's operation to ensure a safe environment conducive to learning with consistent and transparent implementation.
- ✓ The application describes how the school plans to involve parents/guardians as partners in the education of their children and to build and maintain family-school partnerships that support students' academic progress and social-emotional well-being. Describe any commitments or volunteer activities the school will offer to parents.
- ✓ The application describes how stakeholder satisfaction will be gauged and the process for collecting and publicizing results. Stakeholders include parents, faculty, and students.
- ✓ The application describes the relationships the applicant group has established or intends to establish with community agencies and organizations that will support the school's educational program and serve the youth who attend the school. Explain the nature of the proposed partnership/relationship(s) and how it will support the school's mission and vision. Letters of support or commitment should be included as attachments.
- ✓ The application explains how the school plans to deliver nutrition program services to students, including what meals and/or snacks will be served and when. Describe how you plan to administer the free and reduced lunch program and in the case of a Horace Mann charter school, indicate what role, if any, the district will have in delivery of the school's nutritional program. All public schools in the Commonwealth are required to make a school lunch available to students, including a free or reduced price lunch for students who meet income eligibility requirements. Regardless of a school's participation in the National School Lunch Program, school lunches must be made available and under certain circumstances, breakfast as well.
- ✓ The application describes any ancillary and support services you expect to offer students and families, for example counseling, family outreach, and/or relationships with community organizations or service agencies. Any wrap-around services described by the school should indicate committed partners and provide letters of commitment as attachments.
- ✓ The application describes your plan to hire a school nurse and his/her role in your school.

Additional criterion for Horace Mann II (conversion) applicants:

- ✓ The application indicates whether the proposed school characteristics and culture different from the existing school's school characteristics and culture and how it differs.
- ✓ The application describes any proposed changes in expectations for staff.
- ✓ The application describes the process the applicant group and proposed board of trustees will use to make these changes and support successful implementation.

III. HOW WILL THE SCHOOL DEMONSTRATE ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY?

A. CAPACITY

Public school charters are granted to a board of trustees. Members of boards of trustees are public agents authorized by the state and are responsible for competent stewardship and oversight of the school while maintaining policies, establishing and monitoring progress toward performance goals, and implementing governance systems to ensure the success and sustainability of the school. In general, it is important that these individuals possess a wide variety of skills and qualifications that will enable them to found and sustain an excellent school. In the case of a charter school network, it is important that these individuals recognize the increasing complexity of the work involved. The board of trustees must be of a number sufficient to provide effective oversight of the schools and to participate in the considerable amount of work required to govern multiple charter schools.

When describing the capacity of the existing board of trustees, the application should address the following criteria:

- ✓ The application summarizes briefly within the text of the document each founder's and/or board member's experience and qualifications. The combination of individuals' experience and qualifications should demonstrate that the founders and/or board members:
 - have the experience and qualifications necessary to implement the proposal;
 - demonstrate the capacity to found and sustain an excellent charter school network;
 - can manage public funds effectively and responsibly;
 - include a diverse board of trustees with members who possess skills and experience in areas such as education, management, finance, development and law; and
 - have tangible ties to, and broad and diverse representation from the community(ies) the school currently and/or propose to serve.
- ✓ Each member of the applicant group must submit a resume as an attachment to the final application, including current board members, present or proposed network leadership, and the proposed school leader, if identified.
- ✓ The application identifies any organizations that are supporting the development of the proposed school and charter school network, as applicable. Describe the organization's current and proposed role and any resources the organization has contributed or intend to contribute to the school's development and implementation.

B. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

As entities of the state, public charter schools must meet a number of legal requirements set forth by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Many of these requirements are outlined in the *Charter School Administrative and Governance Guide: An Overview of the Laws and Regulations that Boards of Trustees and School Leaders Need to Know*, this document can be found online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/governance/adminguide.doc>.

A school's ability to carry out its purpose and objectives is largely determined by the governance structure of the school and by developing an effective board of trustees. A strong board of trustees defines the mission of the school, develops school policies and changes them when appropriate, hires qualified personnel to manage the school's day-to-day operations and holds them accountable for meeting established goals, and formulates a long-range plan and charter school accountability plan that will ensure the school's continued stability. In the case of a charter school network, it is important that the board maintains the quality of existing schools as it seeks to establish new charter schools that yield similar high quality results for stakeholders. In addition to its many other responsibilities, the board must ensure that the school is complying with all of the state and federal laws that apply to the school and that the board itself is operating in accordance with the rules set out by all applicable Massachusetts laws and regulations. Finally,

the board is responsible for operating the school in accordance with its charter and with any approved amendments to its charter.

(1) Current and Proposed Charter School Network (as applicable)

- ✓ The application describes briefly how the board came to decide to submit a charter application for the proposed school and why the board is united to establish the proposed charter school in addition to the current charter school(s).
- ✓ The application describes the desired outcomes as a board governing multiple schools.
- ✓ The application describes the primary anticipated challenges to achieving the board's desired outcomes over the next 5 years and how these challenges were identified.
- ✓ The application describes the existing capacity of the board to address these identified challenges and the governance areas that require further development.
- ✓ The application describes the board of trustees' willingness and the school/network's viability if faced with limitations to the implementation of the proposed network plan.
- ✓ If intending to add to an existing network of schools, the application provides evidence of the board's effectiveness in overseeing multiple charter schools.

Additional criterion for Horace Mann II (conversion) applicants:

- ✓ The application describes how the applicant group and potential board of trustees will ensure the successful transition to the new governance structure required for a Horace Mann charter school.

(2) Governance Structure

- ✓ The application explains the proposed and/or current reporting structure and relationship between the board of trustees and the individual(s) reporting directly to the board regarding the governance and management of the proposed and/or current charter school network.
- ✓ The application includes a brief job description for each officer of the board of trustees.
- ✓ The application explains any proposed changes in the board's organizational structure, decision-making processes, and/or modifications of the existing board's membership to help oversee and support the organization's plans to manage more than one school and/or build a network.
- ✓ The application describes any committees, advisory groups, and/or task forces and their contributions to the board's effectiveness as a governing body over the past five years.
- ✓ The application includes a copy of your complete bylaws in the attachments.

(3) Roles and Responsibilities

- ✓ The application provides examples of the board's actions governing the current school during its current charter term that accurately reflect an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the board of trustees, consistent with public accountability, such as open meeting law, state ethics law, and charter school law.
- ✓ The application describes the processes related to the board's oversight of the school, including setting priorities and goals; monitoring progress towards priorities and goals; evaluating the school leader(s); developing the annual budget; monitoring the school's finances; and conducting long-term financial and strategic planning. Provide examples of corrective action in response to identified challenges.
- ✓ The application describes the systems in place to ensure clear decision-making and communication processes that facilitate and ensure public accountability, including board meetings that are designed to foster open, deliberate, and thorough discussions.
- ✓ The application describes the process and procedure for handling complaints made to the board.
- ✓ The application describes the annual process the board uses to evaluate its own performance, and describe the steps taken to guide its development as an effective governing board. Provide specific examples whenever possible.

Additional criterion for Horace Mann II (conversion) applicants:

- ✓ The application describes the role distinctions amongst the board of trustees, school district, and school leadership of the existing Horace Mann charter school as they relate to curriculum, personnel decisions, budget allocation, and vendor selection. The application provides a clear sense of the investment of all parties in the success of the existing school.

(4) Policy Development

- ✓ The application describes the process by which the board of trustees develops policies and makes decisions. Provide specific examples whenever possible.
- ✓ The application describes the process for seeking feedback from the school staff, parents, and the larger community when setting policy. Provide specific examples whenever possible.

(5) Board Sustainability

- ✓ The application describes the recruitment, and selection processes for new board members.
- ✓ The application describes specific plans for the recruitment of additional board members with the skills and expertise that will ensure the sustainability of the proposed charter school network, and the targeted qualifications sought in new board members, if applicable.
- ✓ The application describes the orientation and development process for new board members.
- ✓ The application describes the board's experience over the past five years in recruiting and retaining qualified and effective new board members.
- ✓ The application describes the succession planning for board officers.

(6) Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)¹⁰

For all Horace Mann Applicants (I, II, and III)

All final applications for Horace Mann charter schools must include a **Type A Memorandum of Understanding**, and if the information in the application indicates that modifications are required to the collective bargaining agreement(s), the final application must also include a draft Type B Memorandum of Understanding. The memoranda of understanding ensure that the proposed charter school, the school committee of the district in which the charter school is located, and the collective bargaining unit understand and agree to the relevant portions of the charter application. Collective bargaining employees continue to be members of the local collective bargaining unit; accrue seniority; and receive, at a minimum, the salary and benefits established by the local collective bargaining agreement. Employees may be exempt from specific provisions of the local collective bargaining agreement (including work rules) to the extent provided by the charter and the executed memorandum of understanding.

Type A: Agreements with District

MOU with the school committee of the district in which the charter school is located and the proposed charter school's board of trustees. **A final signed copy of this type of MOU is required in the final application for all types of Horace Mann charter schools.**

¹⁰ For Guidance for the Memoranda of Understanding, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/governance/MOU-hm.pdf>

Type B: Agreements with Staff

MOU with the school committee, the collective bargaining unit, and the proposed charter school board of trustees. The timeline and potential faculty vote vary by type of Horace Mann charter school. The requirements regarding the submission of this type of MOU varies, as follows:

Horace Mann I

- ✓ Attach the **signed final draft (Type B) MOU** that describes any modifications to the collective bargaining agreement(s) between the proposed charter school, the school district and the local collective bargaining unit(s).

Horace Mann II

- ✓ Attach the **final draft (Type B) MOU** that describes any proposed modifications to the collective bargaining agreement(s). **This MOU must be approved by a majority of the faculty at the school within 30 days of submission of application.**

Horace Mann III

- ✓ Attach the **final draft (Type B) MOU** that describes any proposed modifications to the collective bargaining agreement(s). The charter school's board of trustees must negotiate with the collective bargaining unit and school committee in good faith regarding any modifications to collective bargaining agreements following the award of a charter.

(7) School Management Contract¹¹

If the board intends to enter into a contract with another entity to provide substantially all the school's educational or management services, such as an educational management organization (EMO), (whether or not the entity meets the requirements of proven provider), the applicant groups must:

- ✓ Identify the entity.
- ✓ Include a comprehensive summary of the entity's history, a description of how it implements its program, extensive evidence of past results (including student academic achievement and financial status) of its school management efforts, and its educational philosophy. There should be strong evidence that the entity has demonstrated positive academic results and responsible fiscal management, as well as success in serving similar student populations.
- ✓ Disclose and explain any termination or nonrenewal of contracts for equivalent services for any other public schools in the U.S. within the past five years.
- ✓ Explain how and why the entity was selected, what due diligence has been conducted, and how contracting with this entity will assist the school in meeting the challenges outlined in your description of the community(ies). Provide a clear description of the services to be provided by the entity.
- ✓ Describe the respective roles and responsibilities of the school's board of trustees and the entity for the financial management and effective oversight of the school, and the internal controls that the board will put into place, including a plan to monitor the performance of the entity to hold them accountable.
- ✓ Include a draft of the proposed contract. The draft contract may be submitted as an attachment and does not count towards the page limit for the application. The contract must include a delineation of the roles and responsibilities of the other entity and the school, a description of how the charter school board of trustees will monitor the academic performance and fiscal activity of the school, performance

¹¹ Please see the Management Contract section of the *Opening Procedures Handbook*, available online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/new/?section=handbook> ; and the Purchasing section of the *Charter School Administrative and Governance Guide*, available online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/governance/adminguide.doc>. (This document indicates the Department's review criteria and protocol for management contracts.)

evaluation measures (including student academic performance), the total fee paid for management services, a description of the payment structure, clarification of authority over hiring and firing, and the conditions and procedures for the contract's renewal and termination.

(8) Programmatic Relationship with Other Organizations

- ✓ If you are filing the application with a college, university, museum, educational institution, other not-for-profit entity, or any other partner please provide the information below:
 - Identify the partner organization. Indicate the name of the contact person at the partner organization with the mailing address, phone number, and email address.
 - Provide a letter of commitment from the organization indicating the proposed affiliation, and the terms and scope of the partnership.
 - Describe the nature and purpose of the school's partnership with the organization.
 - Briefly explain how the relationship enhances, complements, and/or supports the mission and educational philosophy of the proposed charter school.
 - Explain if the partner organization will be involved in the governance of the school.

C. MANAGEMENT

School management is fundamental to creating an environment that can support a successful charter school. In this section we ask applicants to write about (1) school and network management structure; (2) school leadership roles and responsibilities; (3) network leadership roles and responsibilities; and (4) human resources.

(1) School and Network Management Structure

- ✓ The application includes a school organizational chart for year one of operation and at full student enrollment that encompasses all employees of the proposed school. The application describes how the applicant group determined the structure shown in the organizational chart and explains any changes in this organizational chart from the existing school.
- ✓ The application includes a narrative that clearly explains the reporting structure and relationship between the school's leader and administration regarding teachers, specialists, and other staff members.
- ✓ The application includes a network organizational chart that encompasses all existing and proposed schools and employees providing services to multiple schools (a 'central office' configuration, if applicable). Provide a comprehensive narrative that describes the board's plans to develop and manage a network of charter schools through the proposed organizational structure.
- ✓ The application describes the lines of authority and communication among school leadership (e.g. chief executive officer, executive director, principal, instructional leader, operational leaders, and other key leaders and administrators) and staff at each individual school and among schools.

Additional criterion for Horace Mann II (conversion) applicants:

- ✓ The application indicates whether the proposed school management structure is different from the existing school's management structure and how it differs.
- ✓ The application describes any proposed changes in expectations for staff.
- ✓ The application describes the process the applicant group and proposed board of trustees will use to make these changes and support successful implementation.

(2) School Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

- ✓ The application describes the plan for how the school will make key organizational decisions about curriculum and instruction, student achievement, professional development, culture, staffing, fiscal planning, and operations.

- ✓ The application describes the roles and primary responsibilities of the school's leader and other administrative staff. Articulate key role distinctions with regard to curriculum development and implementation, instructional leadership, student achievement, personnel decisions, financial management, and operations.
- ✓ If the applicant group includes the proposed school leader (or any other position at the school), the application describes the process and criteria used to determine that the individual is the best candidate for the position. Identify the skills and experience of the selected individual(s) and describe how their professional background supports their capacity to be successful in founding a high quality charter school and achieving the school's mission as the school leader or a member of the leadership team. If the proposed school leader has never led a school, describe any training programs that s/he has completed or is currently participating in.
- ✓ If the applicant group does not include the proposed school leader, the application describes the desired skills and experience of the ideal individual and the plans for the recruitment and selection of the school leader.
- ✓ If the educational/instructional leader is different from the school leader, the application describes the desired skills and experience of the ideal individual and the plans for the recruitment and selection of the instructional leader.
- ✓ The application describes how administrators will be evaluated and by whom. For more information about educator evaluation in Massachusetts see: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/>.

(3) Network Leadership Roles and Responsibilities (if applicable)

- ✓ The application describes the plan for how the network will make key organizational decisions about curriculum and instruction, student achievement, professional development, culture, staffing, fiscal planning, and operations.
- ✓ The application describes plans to build organizational capacity, and share resources and best practices in order to improve productivity across schools, while improving educational outcomes.
- ✓ The application describes how the board of trustees and school leadership will leverage current expertise within the existing school to successfully open and sustain the proposed school. Describe the role of staff from the existing school in supporting the development of the new school.
- ✓ The application describes how the board of trustees will address potential human resource challenges as it grows to scale over the next five years. Describe the actions that will be taken to attract, develop, and retain an effective leadership team to implement the proposed school and maintain current school(s).
- ✓ The application describes what activities the board and school leadership will undertake to ensure consistency of the school model in its implementation at different schools.
- ✓ If the current school leader will transition to a network role or a new hire will occupy the primary reporting role to the board, the application describes the criteria and process the board will use or has used to select the network leader, if applicable, and describe the anticipated changes to the criteria and process used by the board to evaluate the individual in the network leadership role.

(4) Human Resources

- ✓ The application describes the qualifications and attributes of an ideal teacher for the proposed school.
- ✓ The application describes the school's plan for staff recruitment, advancement, and retention. The plan should include specific strategies for recruiting and retaining effective teachers, and reflect the anticipated efficiencies provided by creation and/or growth of a charter school network.
- ✓ The application describes briefly the teaching program of typical teachers. Indicate how many hours they will be performing instructional duties and other school-related responsibilities they will have outside the classroom (lunch duty, dismissal, advisory group, after-school program).

- ✓ The application explains the school’s working conditions and compensation package(s) that will attract highly qualified staff. Be clear on the specific commitments expected of and made to school employees, including leadership, administrators, faculty, and non-instructional staff.
- ✓ The application explains how individual base salaries and increases will be determined for all employees, including leadership, administrators, teachers, and non-instructional staff.
- ✓ In the case of a **Horace Mann charter school**, the application describes the procedures for:
 - a) hiring, evaluating, transferring, promoting, and dismissing teachers (including potential layoffs in the district that could affect the charter school faculty);
 - b) hiring, evaluating, transferring, promoting, and dismissing non-teaching staff; and
 - c) communicating and coordinating between the charter school and the school district superintendent on items a) and b).
- ✓ In the case of a **Horace Mann charter school**, the application describes the intended relationship between the proposed charter school and the staff at the school, summarize the key agreements and specify the details of any relevant waivers to the local collective bargaining agreement(s) within the Type B MOU. Modifications to these agreement(s) that are made after the charter is granted will require approval from the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- ✓ The application includes a staffing chart and narrative staffing plan, for each year of the proposed charter school within the five year term of the charter that is viable and adequate for the effective implementation of the proposed educational program. Explain the process of determining job positions, roles, and responsibilities that provides evidence of knowledge of opening and operating a high quality charter school. Indicate the number of administrators by title, the number of faculty including classroom teachers by grade and/or subject, the number of aides or assistants, the number of special student service providers, and other specialists, clerical staff, and any other school employees. Include contractors or district resources as applicable. Ensure the chart and plan are consistent with the submitted budget, the organizational chart(s), student enrollment planning, and staffing levels described in other sections of the application. For information on teacher qualifications, please see the technical advisory entitled Teacher Quality in Massachusetts Charter Schools at http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/tech_advisory/07_1.html.

D. FACILITIES AND STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

The school must provide facilities and transportation that meet applicable state and federal requirements, are suited to its programs, and are sufficient to serve diverse student needs.

When describing plans for school facilities and student transportation, the application should address the following criteria:

- ✓ The application describes the process for identifying viable options for a facility for this school and any sites already identified. Explain why these sites were chosen as possibilities. If a specific facility has not been determined, describe the applicant group’s plan for identifying possible locations, choosing the final location, securing all necessary local building approvals for use of the facility as a charter school, and securing financing.
- ✓ In the case of a proposed **Horace Mann charter school**, the application indicates the facilities that will be provided by the local school district and at what cost to the charter school.
- ✓ If possible, the application includes a layout and description of the proposed charter school facility. Include the number and size of classrooms, common areas, and recreational space.
- ✓ If a facility has not been selected, the application includes potential locations that are under consideration and discusses the process and timeline for selecting, acquiring, renovating as applicable, and occupying a suitable facility.
- ✓ The application describes the financing plans and proposed budget for acquisition (purchase or lease) of a facility and any necessary renovations to meet the school’s needs, to meet all local building requirements for use of the facility as a charter school, and to meet accessibility requirements. Please be aware that Commonwealth charter schools may take out loans, but the loan

may not extend beyond the term of the charter without approval of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Please see M.G.L. c. 71, § 89(k) (6).

- ✓ The application includes plans for student transportation and describes how transportation services will be provided to eligible students. The application states explicit intent to utilize district transportation services or to provide services independently of the district.
- ✓ In the case of a proposed **Horace Mann charter school**, the application describes the capacity of the district to adapt to a district wide school, as opposed to “neighborhood schools.”
- ✓ The application explains how students who are physically challenged will be transported and how all students, staff, parents, and the general public who are physically challenged will have access to the school facility in accordance with state and federal law.¹²

E. SCHOOL FINANCES

Having the capability to manage school finances is essential for accountability and organizational viability. Comprehensive financial planning is an indispensable tool for successful charter school planning, program implementation, and the monitoring and evaluation of resource allocations. In this section, we ask applicants to describe their fiscal policies and procedures; complete a three year operating budget and a first year cash flow projection; and provide a descriptive budget narrative. The school finances narrative and budget should demonstrate knowledge of the practical matters relevant to the operation of a school.

(1) Fiscal Management¹³

- ✓ The application explains the systems and procedures for managing the school’s finances, and indicates how the current practices will vary to support the proposed network of schools, including the level of site-based financial management the proposed school(s) will have. Name the individual(s)/role(s) responsible for financial oversight and management of the school(s) and describe his/her qualifications.
- ✓ The application describes the board and school leadership’s prior track record of effective financial management over the past five years.
- ✓ The application describes how the board will increase efficiency related to the management and use of financial resources. The narrative should reflect the issues when developing a network within one municipality or multiple municipalities, as applicable.
- ✓ The application describes the fiscal controls and financial management policies the board of trustees employs to remain informed of the school’s financial position.
- ✓ The application describes how the school will track finances in its daily business operations in order to maintain needed cash-flow.
- ✓ The application describes contingency planning for potential challenges in cash flow or budget shortfalls due to lower than anticipated student enrollment or other financial challenges in the early years of operation, include specific strategies.
- ✓ In the case of a proposed **Horace Mann charter school**, the application explains the financial arrangement with the local district described within the attached final draft Type A MOU. The financial arrangement ensures the charter school’s autonomy over its operations, ensures that the school receives district funds as scheduled, and indicates the dates when school district funds will be transferred to the school’s account. Horace Mann charter schools are required to open their own bank account.

¹² For more information, please see the Coordinated Program Review Procedures, Special Education Methods of Administration at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/review/cpr/instrument/sped.pdf>, Criterion SE49A; the Coordinated Program Review Procedures, Civil Rights Methods of Administration at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/review/cpr/instrument/civilrights.pdf>, MOA 22 and the ADA checklist; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791 et seq.) and its accompanying regulations (34 CFR 104.21 and 104.22); and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12132) and its accompanying regulations (28 CFR 35.149 and 35.150).

¹³ Please refer to the Department’s *Recommended Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual*, available online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/finance/auditing/>.

- ✓ In the case of a proposed **Horace Mann charter school**, the application describes the basis that will be used for calculating the district's payments to the school, and indicates the specific services that will be provided by the local school district and at what cost to the charter school.
- ✓ In the case of a proposed **Horace Mann charter school**, the application describes the capacity of the district to keep a separate accounting for the Horace Mann charter school.

(2) Operating Budget and Budget Narrative

- ✓ The application summarizes financial forecasts from the school's start-up phase through its third year of operation. Financial forecasts must include total expected realistic sources of revenue—including tuition and other grants (federal, state, and private), and fundraising—as well as all expenditures, the timeframe for a positive cash balance, and the anticipated growth of the school. Define and give support for the assumptions behind projections.
- ✓ Applicants must submit a cash flow projection for the first year of operation, and a multi-year budget from the school's start-up phase through its third year of operation. Download the electronic budget template, including instructions, from <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/app/budgettemplate.xls>. Cash flow projections are expected to reflect a similar level of detail to the budget template used for the annual budgets – see templates. All submitted financials must accurately reflect any financial arrangements across the proposed and/or current charter school network. Applicants are advised to provide an overall network budget that reflects the extent to which individual school budgets interact, as applicable.
- ✓ The cash flow projection and budget need to be realistic and reflect the expenses related to all commitments proposed in the application, through the proposed school's third year of operation, including the school's educational program, expected student population of students with disabilities and English language learners, human resources needs, and the acquiring and repayment of potential debt.
- ✓ The cash flow projection and budget narrative should discuss and explain the projected revenue and expense amounts, including descriptions of administrative and instructional staff and other operating expenses. Provide detailed explanations for each of the three years of the draft budget and the cash flow projection for the first year of operation. Define and give support for the assumptions behind projections.
- ✓ The application explains how the school will ensure it has sufficient funds to cover all anticipated expenses, including but not limited to start-up costs, and school operation.
- ✓ The application describes whether the applicant group expects the school to raise additional funds and why. The application briefly describes any planned fundraising efforts and who will lead and coordinate these efforts. The application briefly describes any financing, short-term or long-term, that the school anticipates securing during the period covered by this budget, including the planning and first year implementation period.

A note on grants: Currently, Massachusetts does not have the federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant available for future charter schools. The USED has yet to announce a new Request for Proposal (RFP) for the CSP but we hope it will be offered fall 2014. If the Department receives funding from the federally funded CSP grant, this grant allows new Commonwealth and Horace Mann charter schools to receive start-up funds to support the development and implementation of the school's instructional program during their planning period and first two years of operation. If chartered, the charter application serves as the initial application for any available CSP start-up grant funds. Questions can be forwarded to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign at (781) 338-3227.

F. ACTION PLAN

After a charter is granted, but before the school opens is a time of great activity. The action plan outlines the steps that need to be taken within a clear timeline for opening the school.

The applicant group's Action Plan should:

- ✓ Outline the strategies, steps, designated point person and provide a clear timeline for opening the school, dating from March 1st, in the year the charter is granted to the first day of school. The action plan should be specific and consistent with the proposal's objectives, and outline the steps that need to be taken for a successful school launch. In a chart, describe the timeline; action(s) to be taken (specific to and consistent with the application's objectives); designated point person; and start date and projected completion date.
- ✓ Outline the steps that have been and need to be taken to develop and implement both the governance oversight and management of multiple schools, and the school based elements that will support inter-school relationships and will ultimately build success. (This is not counted toward the page limit.)

Applicant groups are encouraged to consult the *Opening Procedures Handbook* for specific requirements, available online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/new/?section=handbook>.

IV. REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS – FINAL APPLICATION

Limited to **40** pages

All attachments should be sequentially numbered and clearly referred to in the text. The choice of non-required attachments is up to the applicant group, though attachments should be used to provide additional evidence, support a particular aspect of the application, or lend insight into the applicant group.

Required and counted toward 40 page maximum:

All applications must contain:

- Current Bylaws
- Draft Recruitment and Retention Plan for Proposed School
- Draft Enrollment Policy and Application for Admission for Proposed School
- Draft School Calendar for Proposed School
- Draft Organizational Charts – Proposed School and Network
- Operating School Level Budget: Projected Revenues and Expenditures, and Cash Flow Projection. (use electronic budget template, available on the Department website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/new/> and <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/app/budgettemplate.xls>.)
- Overall Network Budget, as applicable.

Required, but not counted toward 40 page maximum:

- Cover Sheet
- Information Sheet
- Certification Statement
- General Statement of Assurances - Application for a Massachusetts Commonwealth Public Charter School
- Statement of Assurances - Federal Charter School Program Grant
- Executive Summary (no more than four pages)
- Individual resumes from each applicant group member, indicating if an individual is a current board member, current employee of the board, proposed school leader, or proposed for any other position(s).
- Description of curriculum scope and sequence for grade levels beyond those required in the text of the application, including the content and skills to be taught in the core content areas.
- Draft management or EMO contract, for proven provider and non-proven provider applicants (if applicable).
- School Improvement Plan for Horace Mann II (conversion) schools only.
- Memoranda of Understanding (if applicable)

Horace Mann I

- The signed (Type A) final draft MOU between the board of trustees of the proposed charter school and the school district.
- The signed (Type B) final draft MOU between the board of trustees of the proposed charter school, the school district and the local collective bargaining unit, if there are any modifications to the collective bargaining agreement(s).

Horace Mann II

- The signed (Type A) final draft MOU between the board of trustees of proposed charter school and the school district.
- The draft (Type B) MOU that describes any proposed modifications to the collective bargaining agreement(s), if there are any modifications to the collective bargaining agreement(s).

Horace Mann III

- The signed (Type A) final draft MOU between the board of trustees of proposed charter school and the school district.
- The draft (Type B) MOU that describes any proposed modifications to the collective bargaining agreement(s), if there are any modifications to the collective bargaining agreement(s).