



For Immediate Release:

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Seven Applications for New Charter Schools Submitted to State Department of Education

HARTFORD, CT—The State Department of Education released information today on submissions received in response to its request for proposals for new Connecticut charter schools. In total, seven providers responded by the April 1 deadline with proposals to open schools in five towns throughout Connecticut. The locations for the proposed charters are Bridgeport, New Haven, Norwalk, Waterbury, and Willimantic/Windham. Of the seven submissions, five applications were for state charter schools and two applications proposed local charter schools.

“We are encouraged by the response and impressed by the considerable effort that went into the submissions by hopeful charter school providers given the short window of time,” said Debra Kurshan, Chief Turnaround Officer. “Charter schools are one option among many, including Commissioner’s Network schools and magnet schools, for districts to ensure there are high-quality options for students. For parents and students, charter schools offer greater choice regarding the educational paths they may wish to pursue.”

The expansion of high-quality schools, including traditional schools, magnets, charters, and other models, was one of the six principles for education reform Governor Dannel P. Malloy announced in the lead-up to the 2012 legislative session. In that session, the Governor and the Connecticut General Assembly enacted reforms to increase charter school accountability and funding.

The goals of charter schools are to provide enhanced options for families, especially those in low-performing districts; to serve as centers for innovation and educational leadership; to improve student performance; and to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation. Charters may also have a specialized educational focus, such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Charter schools are independent, nonsectarian public schools that operate independently of a local or regional board of education. They are organized as nonprofit entities and are governed by a governing council in accordance with the terms of the charter and state law. The State Board of Education holds charter schools accountable for the academic success of their students and efforts to recruit and retain disadvantaged student populations.

Seventeen state charter schools, representing fewer than two percent of public schools, are now in operation in Connecticut. The last new charter school was granted approval in 2007.

The Department issued the request for proposals (RFP) on February 7, 2013, and it was open for a period of seven weeks. This year's applications will be reviewed and scored according to state law and RFP rules and procedures. First, applications will be reviewed for completeness; the Department will notify applicants if their proposals will move to the next phase of the process. Complete applications will be evaluated and scored against the review criteria detailed in the RFP. Applicants will be invited for interviews based on the results of the evaluation. Following the interview phase, public hearings will be held in the local districts. The Commissioner of Education will send recommendations to the State Board of Education, which the Board will consider at a subsequent meeting.

For local charter applications, the local boards of education will have 60 days to review complete applications, hold a public hearing, survey teachers and parents to determine if there is sufficient interest in the establishment of a local charter school, and vote on complete applications. If the local boards of education approve the applications, they will forward them to the State Department of Education. The Department would then review and score the applications. The Commissioner of Education will send recommendations to the State Board of Education, which the Board will consider at a subsequent meeting.

By state law, preference will be awarded to charter school applications that propose serving the following student populations: English language learners; students with a history of low academic performance; students from low-income households; students with a history of behavioral and social difficulties; students identified as requiring special education services; or students of a single gender. Applicants also receive preference if their proposals seek: to improve the academic performance of an existing school that has consistently demonstrated substandard performance; to serve students in priority school districts or in a district where at least 75 percent of enrolled students are members of racial or ethnic minorities; to locate a new state charter school at a work-site; or if the state charter school applicant is an institution of higher learning.

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Charter School Name	Grades	Town Location	State or Local	Application Partners	Student Population	School Focus
Brass City Charter School Plans to open 07/13	PK – Grade 8	Waterbury	State	CT Community Foundation and Leever Foundation	High need student population, free reduced meals	Rigorous academic and holistic social-emotional learning
Path Academy Plans to open 07/14	9-12	Willimantic/ Windham	State	Our Piece of the Pie (OPP) and Charter School Business Management, Inc. (CSBM)	High need student population, history of low performance.	Supporting students through mastery of the critical skills necessary for success in college, career, and community.
Whittier School Plans to open 06/10/13	PK – Grade 4	Bridgeport	Local	The Center for Montessori in the Public Sector (NCMPS)	High need student population' free reduced meals	A high-quality, public, Montessori Program for children between the ages of three and thirteen.
Elm City Montessori School Has a facility/Occupancy TBD	PK – Grade 4	New Haven	Local	The Center for Montessori in the Public Sector (NCMPS)	High need student population, free reduced meals, EII	A high-quality, public, Montessori Program for children between the ages of three and thirteen.

Charter School Name	Grades	Town Location	State or Local	Application Partners	Student Population	School Focus
Booker T. Washington Academy Charter School Plans to open 07/14	PK – Grade 5	New Haven	State		High need student population, history of low performance.	The small class size. Commitment to high level of learning.
South Norwalk Collegiate Academy Plans to open 07/14	K-5	Norwalk	State		High need student population, history of low performance.	Develop critical thinking, character development and social and cultural awareness.
Connecticut Academy of Math and Science Has a facility/ 2014	7-12	New Haven	State	Apple Education Services	New Haven resident students	STEM