**Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual School**

**Terms of Certificate**

This document and its attachments are the material terms of the certificate for Greater Commonwealth Virtual School. From time to time, the material terms of the certificate may be amended pursuant to 603 CMR 52.00. The school’s board of trustees must vote on all amendments to the certificate and the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education (Commissioner) must approve them before such changes are effective and implemented. Once approved, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) will update this document accordingly.

1. **Name:**

Greater Commonwealth Virtual School (GCVS)

On September 29, 2021, the Commissioner approved a school name amendment from Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School to Greater Commonwealth Virtual School.

1. **Board of trustees:**

Fernando Fleury

Jennifer Reynolds

Donovan Stevens

Benjamin Opara

Michel Dodge

John Lunt

The board of trustees must include a minimum of five members. Members of the boards of trustees of Commonwealth of Massachusetts virtual schools may not be paid for attendance at board meetings but may receive reimbursement of reasonable expenses.

1. **Term of certificate:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year Opened** | July 1, 2013 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2016 (3-year certificate term)  2019 (3-year certificate term)  2022 (4-year certificate term) |

July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2026

Note: The [2022 renewal of GCVS’ certificate was explicitly conditioned](https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2022/2022-03/). Failure to meet the conditions may result in the Board placing GCVS on probation, revoking its certificate, or imposing additional conditions on its certificate (See section 18: Conditions).

1. **Annual per pupil tuition rate:**

In fiscal year 2026, GCVS’s annual per pupil tuition will be thirteen thousand, one hundred and fourteen dollars with seventy-five dollars per pupil retained by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for administration of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts virtual schools program.[[1]](#footnote-2) The cost of special education services shall be calculated in accordance with 603 CMR 10.07(3) and shall be added to the per pupil tuition amount unless such services are provided in kind by the sending district.

GCVS may provide courses to public school districts for a fee, pursuant to G.L. c. 71, § 94 (2) (b) and (k) and 603 CMR 52.05(12).

1. **Maximum enrollment and grade levels:**

The maximum enrollment was amended, on February 10, 2022 with an increase of 150 additional seats, for a new maximum enrollment of 1,200. Granting additional seats was explicitly conditioned on GCVS amending its enrollment policy to provide the first order of enrollment preference to students who are unable to attend school in-person because of the student’s medical condition. This request was granted to meet the elevated demand for students who are unable to attend to school in-person because of the student’s medical condition.

Students must be 5 by September 1st of the year of enrollment.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grades | Enrollment |
| K-12 | 1,200 |

1. **Enrollment region:**

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

1. **Mission, purpose, and specialized focus:**

The mission was amended in November 2023.

*“The Greater Commonwealth Virtual School, a public school of choice, serves students from across Massachusetts who need a learning community that is accessible, flexible, and inclusive. As a pioneer of online learning, we empower our educators to tailor learning experiences to each student’s strengths, interests, and challenges. We redefine and change how students and teachers engage through innovative technology, while ensuring mastery of competencies embedded in a rigorous curriculum.”*

1. **Educational program, instructional methodology, and services for students:**
2. **Educational Program:**

* Provide mastery-learning aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core Standards;
* Deliver lessons in diverse ways to accommodate various learning styles and needs;
* A Learning Coach to facilitate daily lessons and supervise and support students;
* Software Management Programs to give students and parents daily information about work to be accomplished and quality of work accomplished;
* Asynchronous programs to allow students to learn anytime;
* Online classrooms for interaction between faculty and students and cooperative learning opportunities for students to work together on a structured project;
* Demonstrations and simulations using synchronous and asynchronous classroom and video instruction;
* Advanced high school students will be given the opportunity to participate in college dual enrollment programs at no additional cost to the students or their families;
* The school will offer high school students a broad selection of courses, including electives, to enable students to meet graduation requirements and prepare for college and a career. The school will offer mathematics, English language arts, science, and history courses at different skill levels, including Advanced Placement. The school also will offer three years of foreign language for high school students. All high school students will be offered courses sufficient to meet MassCore requirements.
* On December 22, 2022, the Commissioner approved an amendment to the instructional methods to include a semi-autonomous independent learning (SAIL) for a limited number of students in grades 3-5 using Florida Virtual School Global, now known as FlexPoint Education Cloud (FlexPoint). The school implements an internal application process for students to indicate interest in participating in SAIL. The school’s application process must follow the school’s non-discrimination policy and the school must provide special education and English learner services as required by law for any SAIL student requiring such services. Further, GCVS will also ensure daily meetings for wellness checks and some daily synchronous instruction between SAIL students and a teacher.

1. **Instructional methodology:**

* Daily lesson plans, announcements, online school discussions, communication, and support tools;
* Lectures and discussions using both small group, hybrid, and synchronous learning forums
* For grades kindergarten through 8, the curriculum will use formative assessments to track progress and inform instruction.
* To assure students are fully engaged in learning with a home-coach requires teachers to communicate regularly with parents via live synchronous sessions, email, and scheduled telephone conferences. Communications will occur as needed and at least twice monthly. Parents will review student assessment results and engage in discussion of interventions available to students.

1. **Services for students:**

* Personalized Learning Plans and District Accommodation Plan (DCAP) to accommodate individual needs;
* Select number of students who are struggling to progress, including but not limited to students with disabilities will have the opportunity to attend a support center for in-person face-to-face support services;
* The school will provide opportunities for students to develop socially including but not limited to:
  + social gatherings or activities provided regionally or statewide, including back-to-school picnics and academic field trips, designed to enhance the curriculum and targeted toward specific grades;
  + school clubs in person and online for group activities;
  + informing students and parents of resources available in their communities;
  + parent gatherings;
  + a lecture series on topics of interest and importance to students including drugs, alcohol, emotional and physical health, personal safety, interventions; and
  + encouraging students to participate in community health, sport, and fitness programs.
* The school will offer extra-curricular activities through online forums and physical outings.

1. **Governance and bylaws:**

The bylaws were last amended and approved by the Commissioner on February 7, 2023 (Available upon request ).

**10. Schedule/Proposed school year:**

As per the regulations outlined in 603 CMR 27, the school year shall consist of 180 days of instruction. School will commence in late August or early September and end in June, with a minimum of 990 hours for grades 6-12, and a minimum of 900 hours for grades 1-5. Kindergarten may begin after grades 1 through 12 start, as long as this delay does not impact the 425 annual hours required by 603 CMR 8.00. Additional days will be scheduled for Staff Professional Development.

1. **Enrollment policy and preferences:**

The Greater Commonwealth Virtual School enrollment policy was last amended on February 10, 2022. (Available upon request) The enrollment policy outlines the following enrollment preference to:

1. Students who are unable to attend school in-person because of the student’s medical condition;

2. Students who are out of school due to bullying or other safety concerns;

3. Students with disabilities;

4. Students out of school due to pregnancy or parenting;

5. Students who seek an advanced coursework not available in their current school;

6. Students in training for competitive arts or sports whose schedules prevent them from attending school on a regular basis;

7. Students of currently enrolled siblings.

If more applicants are received than the commonwealth virtual school can admit within its enrollment limit, the Greater Commonwealth Virtual School will admit students with an enrollment preference in the order of priority listed above and then will conduct an admissions lottery through using the GCVS electronic enrollment platform. Students who do not receive an offer of admission will be placed on a waitlist.

1. **Attendance Policy:**

The Greater Commonwealth Virtual School amended its attendance policy in November 2023. (Available upon request).

1. **The identity of third party software or curriculum vendor partnerships:**

On September 29, 2021, the Greater Commonwealth Virtual School amended its learning management system from Canvas by Instructure, Inc. to Schoology. In grades K-5, per an amendment approved by the Commissioner in July 2020, the school will use curriculum from Florida Virtual Schools Global (FLVS now also known as FlexPoint, having changed its name in 2022) for all subjects for synchronous programs. This change allowed the school to implement FLVS/Flexpoint across all grades. In grades 6-12, the school will use curriculum from Edgenuity (now also known as Imagine Learning) for all subjects for asynchronous programs.

In November 2023, GCVS was permitted to amend its certificate and pilot curricular materials listed as an appendix to the certificate (Available upon request). GCVS sought this amendment “in order to ensure that the curriculum aligns to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, provides lessons and materials that represent a variety of cultures and perspectives, and is anti-racist.” The goal of this pilot was to reevaluate alternative curriculum materials and amend the certificate in the future to formally implement these curricula.

1. **Proposed contract with management/operational organization, including payments:**

None.

1. **Demonstration of capacity to support and store all critical data in compliance with state and federal law:**

The Greater Commonwealth Virtual School uses PowerSchool and eSped to store all critical student data in compliance with state and federal law. The school has installed the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) client for PowerSchool, enabling secure transmission of data to the Department.

1. **Accountability Plan:**

On November 10, 2022, Greater Commonwealth Virtual School received approval of the Accountability Plan for the 2022-2026 Certificate term.

1. **Expulsion Policy:**

The Greater Commonwealth Virtual School received approval of its expulsion policy on April 6, 2023 (Available upon request).

1. **Conditions on the Certificate:**

The 2022 renewal of the GCVS’ certificate is explicitly conditioned as follows. Failure to meet these conditions may result in the Board placing GCVS on probation, revoking its certificate, or imposing additional conditions on its certificate.

1. *Greater Commonwealth Virtual School must continue to submit to the Department, at virtualschools@mass.gov, board meeting agendas and materials prior to each board meeting at the same time that these items are sent to the school’s board members. Further, the school must submit to the Department the minutes of these proceedings as soon as the school’s board approves them. The Department reserves the right to require the submission of additional information, such as quarterly or monthly financial statements, if board materials do not already include this information. The school must provide such additional information within two business days.*
2. *By July 15, 2022, Greater Commonwealth Virtual School must conduct, document, and submit to the Department evaluations of its special education and English learner education (ELE) programs in a manner consistent with Department expectations. Such evaluations must include comparative data analyses, interpretation of results, and recommendations for needed changes to each program.*
3. *By August 1, 2022, Greater Commonwealth Virtual School must develop and include four-year goals for non-statewide assessments in its Accountability Plan. These goals must be sufficient to allow the school to demonstrate a track record of academic success during the certificate term.*
4. *By August 15, 2022, Greater Commonwealth Virtual School must complete actions and reporting as required by the Department’s Office of Language Acquisition.*
5. *By September 1, 2022, Greater Commonwealth Virtual School must submit for Department approval an updated version of its comprehensive action plan from 2019 to improve academic performance and that addresses other areas for improvement outlined in the summary of review for 2022. The action plan must set clear and specific benchmarks with a timetable and deadlines for completion of key tasks that is sufficient to allow the school's board of trustees and the Department to monitor implementation.*
6. *The school must report on a quarterly basis to the Department and its board of trustees on the progress toward meeting the benchmarks in its updated comprehensive action plan, including the timetable and deadlines for completion of key tasks.*
7. *By September 1, 2022, the board of trustees must engage a consultant and participate in training about governance roles and responsibilities, including obligations related to the Open Meeting Law. By October 15, 2022, the board must develop an action plan and schedule for adequate oversight of the school according to the CMVS Performance Criteria, Criterion 8: Governance.*
8. *By December 31, 2024, the school must demonstrate that it is an academic success by providing evidence of significant and sustained academic improvement in mathematics, English language arts, and science for all students and all student subgroups.*
9. *In addition to meeting the terms of the conditions, GCVS must comply with the terms of its certificate. Failure of GCVS to meet the conditions within the timelines specified may result in immediate suspension and revocation of the school’s certificate.*

1. The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education delegates authority to the Commissioner, in accordance with General Laws c. 15, § 1F, paragraph 3, to act on behalf of the Board in amending the current certificates for the TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School to increase the annual per pupil tuition amount by no more than the annual rate of inflation for fiscal year 2026. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)