# MEMORANDUM

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Russell D. Johnston, Acting Commissioner |
| **Date:** | February 19, 2025 |
| **Subject:** | Charter Schools: Amendments to Maximum Enrollment (Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School, Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers: A Horace Mann Charter Public School, KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School, Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School, South Shore Charter Public School) and Region (Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School) |

Pursuant to the Charter School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.10(1), the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) must approve certain changes to the material terms of a school’s charter, including maximum enrollment and the districts named within a charter school’s region. This year, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) received requests from six schools to increase their maximum enrollment (Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School, Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers: A Horace Mann Charter Public School, KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School, Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School, Salem Academy Charter School, and South Shore Charter Public School) and from one school (Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School) to remove districts in its charter region. I provided you with [an overview of the amendment requests](https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2025/2024-10/item7.2-schedule.docx) in a memorandum dated [October 24, 2024](https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2025/2024-10/item7.docx).

This month, I recommend that the Board approve amendments to the charters of six of these schools: Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School, Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers: A Horace Mann Charter Public School, KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School, Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School, Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School, and South Shore Charter Public School.

I evaluated the charter amendment request submitted by the board of trustees of Salem Academy Charter School. I am not recommending approval of this request at this time.

**Figure 1: Summary of Recommendations**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of  Charter School** | **Region** | **Grade Span** | **Maximum Enrollment** | **Recommendation** |
| Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School (AMSA) | Clinton, Hudson, **Marlborough** (location), Maynard | 6–12 | 966 | Increase enrollment by 34 students |
| Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers: A Horace Mann Charter Public School (EMK) | Boston | 9-12 | 448 | Increase enrollment  by 352 students |
| KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School  (KIPP Lynn) | Lynn | K-12 | 1,586 | Increase enrollment  by 450 students |
| Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School (PVCICS) | Agawam, Amherst, Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Chesterfield-Goshen, Chicopee, Conway, Deerfield, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Frontier, Gill-Montague, Granby, Greenfield, **Hadley** (location), Hampden-Wilbraham, Hampshire, Hatfield, Hawlemont, Holyoke, Leverett, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Mohawk Trail, Northampton, Pelham, Pioneer Valley, Shutesbury, South Hadley, Southampton, Southwick-Tolland-Granville, Springfield, Sunderland, West Springfield, Westfield, Westhampton, Whately, and Williamsburg | K-12 | 584 | Increase enrollment  by 100 students[[1]](#footnote-2) |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of  Charter School** | **Region** | **Grade Span** | **Maximum Enrollment** | **Recommendation** |
| Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School (PVPA) | Agawam, Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Erving, Frontier, Gateway, Gill-Montague, Granby, Greenfield, Hadley, Hampden-Wilbraham,  Hampshire, Hatfield, Holyoke, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Mohawk Trail, Monroe, Monson, Northampton, Palmer,  Pioneer Valley, Ralph C. Mahar, Rowe,  **South Hadley** (location), Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional, Springfield, Tantasqua, Ware, West Springfield, Westfield | 7-12 | 400 | Reduce the number of districts named in the region to 18 districts |
| South Shore Charter  Public School  (SSCPS) | Abington, Braintree, Brockton, Cohasset, Duxbury, East Bridgewater, Halifax, Hanover, Hingham, Holbrook, Hull, Kingston, Marshfield, **Norwell** (location), Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Quincy, Randolph, Rockland, Scituate, Weymouth, and Whitman-Hanson | K–12 | 1,075 | Increase enrollment by 225 students |

The Department’s assessment of each request is described below in preparation for discussion and vote at the Board’s meeting on February 25. This memorandum details the Department’s review process; each school’s request, and the availability of seats to implement the individual requests; public comment, if received; and my recommendation. This memorandum first presents the amendment requests related to an increase in enrollment, and then the amendment request to remove some districts from a school’s charter region.

**Department Review**

Section 1.10 of the Charter School Regulations contains several criteria to consider in determining whether to grant a school’s request to amend its charter. The Department considers the following factors when reviewing the amendment requests:

* the charter school’s compliance with applicable state, federal, and local law;
* affirmative, credible evidence regarding the faithfulness of the school to the terms of its charter, including the extent to which the school has followed its recruitment and retention plan and has disseminated best practices;
* affirmative, credible evidence regarding the success of the school’s academic program;
* affirmative, credible evidence regarding the viability of the school as an organization;
* the merits of the school’s amendment request when judged against the criteria outlined in the [Charter Amendment and Notification Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/governance/board-amendment-guidelines.docx) and the [Charter School Performance Criteria](https://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/performance-criteria.docx);
* the eligibility of the board of trustees for proven provider status, if required, based upon the qualifications described in [603 CMR 1.04(4)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr1.html?section=04); and
* public comment received regarding the request.[[2]](#footnote-3)

In general, the Department considers requests for increases in maximum enrollment and changes in the districts specified in a school’s charter only after the school undergoes a comprehensive evaluation by the Department following the first renewal of a school’s charter. The Department also generally considers such requests only if a school is operating without explicit conditions imposed upon its charter.

The Department has developed a variety of tools to review and assess school performance. The following tools were used to review school performance during the Department’s process. The Department has developed tools for both general and charter-specific use. The tools below provide evidence related to each school’s faithfulness to the terms of its charter, academic success, and organizational viability. Specifically, the tools present data and information about each school’s academic performance, recruitment and retention of students, student attendance, comparability of enrolled populations to sending districts, graduation rates, and financial health.

* [School and District Performance Summaries](https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiMjA5YjZiNDktYWU5MC00ODYwLWE3MjEtY2E1MzNmMzQ2ZDE2IiwidCI6IjNlODYxZDE2LTQ4YjctNGEwZS05ODA2LThjMDRkODFiN2IyYSJ9)
* [School and District Profiles](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/search/search.aspx?leftNavId=11238)
* Charter School Recruitment and Retention Reporting: [Charter Analysis and Review Tool (CHART)](https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiOWMyMzU4MDctNTQ4ZC00ZDZlLThkOGQtMmMxN2JjMWUxMzNlIiwidCI6IjNlODYxZDE2LTQ4YjctNGEwZS05ODA2LThjMDRkODFiN2IyYSJ9)
* Charter School Accountability: [Charter School Dashboard](https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiODkyNWYwYmEtNjQ1Mi00MzczLTk0NzYtZDZkNzMzMTU5YmE2IiwidCI6IjNlODYxZDE2LTQ4YjctNGEwZS05ODA2LThjMDRkODFiN2IyYSJ9)[[3]](#footnote-4)
* Charter School Financial Reporting: [Charter School Financial Dashboard](https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiNTBmODliMTYtNGZiYi00ODc4LWFlYTEtZmQ4ZDY5MzlhYTk2IiwidCI6IjNlODYxZDE2LTQ4YjctNGEwZS05ODA2LThjMDRkODFiN2IyYSJ9)

If the Commissioner denies a charter school’s amendment request and does not bring the request to the Board for consideration, the school’s board of trustees may seek review of that decision by the Board directly, as provided in 603 CMR 1.10(8).

**Availability of Seats for Commonwealth Charter Schools**

The charter school statute establishes limits on the amount of charter school tuition that districts can transfer to Commonwealth charter schools in any given year.[[4]](#footnote-5) The limits are expressed as a percentage of the district's net school spending (NSS) for that year. Chapter 70 of the General Laws defines NSS, which represents the district's spending on school operations from state and local funds.[[5]](#footnote-6) The majority of school districts are subject to a 9 percent NSS cap for charter school tuition, with the exception of districts performing in the lowest 10 percent statewide based on two years of MCAS performance.[[6]](#footnote-7) School districts performing in the lowest 10 percent have a higher NSS cap of 18 percent. The 9 and 18 percent NSS caps are described in the charter school statute at G.L. c. 71, § 89(i)(2) and (3).[[7]](#footnote-8)

If the tuition for all students who live in a district and attend Commonwealth charter schools exceeds the district's NSS cap, the Department reduces the tuition to bring the amount under the cap.[[8]](#footnote-9) Any such tuition deduction is prorated proportionately across all of the charter schools enrolling students who live in that district. The Department works to avoid such situations, using a variety of regulatory and administrative tools to monitor and control enrollment. Listed below are several of the tools used by the Department.

* Each year, and for each district, the Department calculates an administrative holdback of five percent of total NSS when projecting seats available for the Board to award to new or existing Commonwealth charter schools.
* In its award of new charters or amendments to existing charters, the Board establishes maximum enrollment limits as material terms of every charter.[[9]](#footnote-10)
* The Department may establish specific enrollment limits by sending district, known as sub-caps, for individual Commonwealth charter schools.
* Annually, the Department provides projections related to the number of charter seats available under relevant district NSS caps. Based on these projections, the Department permits Commonwealth charter schools to skip over students who live in districts that are near or at NSS caps when enrolling students.

Managing NSS caps is inherently inexact because the calculation of NSS is made based upon several projected variables to inform the award of charter seats and the admission of students by individual Commonwealth charter schools. Final tuition rates, enrollment numbers, and district spending needed to calculate NSS caps and determine actual compliance are not available until well into the school year for which students were already admitted and are attending Commonwealth charter schools.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that a Commonwealth charter school can enroll students from multiple districts, and multiple Commonwealth charter schools can enroll students from a single district. Students who live in the district or districts specified in a school’s charter are given preference in enrollment, but students who live outside those districts may also apply and be admitted to those schools. Enrollment preferences based upon residence may enhance a student's likelihood of admission, but they do not deprive other students of consideration for admission or of inclusion in an admission lottery. Managing the NSS caps requires the Department to estimate and to project how many students from a particular district will be attending charter schools in future years and to consider enrollment trends generally. As a result, the Department relies heavily on estimates, projections, and administrative safeguards when recommendations are made to the Board for the award of new seats to Commonwealth charter schools. My recommendations take these factors into account when considering whether proposed amendments are reasonable in light of current estimates and projections.

Additionally, the Department annually determines which districts performed in the lowest 10 percent statewide. The Department issued the current list of districts in the lowest 10 percent in May 2024, based on results on the MCAS administered in the two previous school years. The Department calculates and publishes this list annually, in advance of the submission of charter applications and amendment requests. Each year's list informs:

(1) the seats available for award by the Board to new Commonwealth charter schools and to existing Commonwealth charter schools in the coming year; and

(2) the admissions decisions by Commonwealth charter schools for the subsequent school year.

For example, the list published during the last school year, 2023-2024, was based on MCAS results from 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. This list is used for Board decisions during the current school year, 2024-2025. This list is also used by Commonwealth charter schools when making enrollment decisions for the upcoming school year, 2025-2026.[[10]](#footnote-11)

**Amendments to Increase Maximum Enrollment**

**Proven Provider Considerations**

Proven provider status is required to award additional seats to KIPP Lynn and PVCICS. These two schools serve school districts that performed in the lowest 10 percent of all districts based on MCAS results from 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, and enrollment in Commonwealth charter schools from these districts already exceeds or will exceed 9 percent NSS if these requests are granted.[[11]](#footnote-12), [[12]](#footnote-13)

As defined in 603 CMR 1.02, a proven provider is “the board of trustees of an existing charter school that has a record of academic success and organizational viability.” In order to determine if a current board of trustees qualifies for proven provider status, the Commissioner considers 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.[[13]](#footnote-14) The Commissioner also considers all information related to the school's performance, including evaluations during charter renewal. Pursuant to 603 CMR 1.04(4)(b), schools for which proven provider status is required must demonstrate success in student academic performance and evidence of overall academic program success. In making such a determination, the Commissioner considers an array of evidence including, but not limited to:

* proficiency levels and growth measures on the MCAS or equivalent assessments for all students and for one or more targeted subgroups as defined in   
  M.G.L. c. 71, § 89(i)(3),[[14]](#footnote-15) that 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;
* student performance on other standardized tests over no less than a three-year period for cohorts of students, if available, that demonstrates student achievement levels similar to statewide averages in English language arts and mathematics for all students in Massachusetts in comparable grades;
* attendance, retention, and attrition data;
* graduation and dropout data, if applicable; and
* in-school and out-of-school suspension rates.

603 CMR 1.04(4)(b).

Boards of trustees must also demonstrate “organizational viability, which shall include but not be limited to effective governance, effective financial management, effective implementation of recruitment and retention plans, if applicable, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.”

After evaluating the performance of KIPP Lynn and PVCICS based on the evidence of each school's success in the three accountability areas and the qualifications for proven provider status, I identified the boards of trustees of the two schools as proven providers for the purpose of the current amendment requests.

**Net School Spending Considerations**

For the requests from Commonwealth charter schools that seek increased enrollment, the Department determined that there are sufficient seats under the relevant NSS caps to accommodate each request. The Department’s projections indicate that there are sufficient seats available to accommodate the proposed amendment for KIPP Lynn. Based on the enrollment of Lynn residents in Commonwealth charter schools, approximately 1,361 estimated seats remain in Lynn under the 18 percent NSS cap with an additional five percent buffer to guard against fluctuations in enrollment and district spending.

Based on Department projections, there are also sufficient estimated seats available under the relevant NSS caps to accommodate the proposed amendments requested by three regional charter schools, AMSA, PVCICS, and SSCPS.[[15]](#footnote-16)

* There are approximately 787 seats estimated across AMSA’s charter region, with an additional five percent buffer, that can accommodate its proposed increase of 34 students. One of the four districts in the school’s region, Hudson, is at or near its NSS cap based on current enrollment. This will limit any significant increase in student enrollment from Hudson.
* There are approximately 3,862 seats estimated across PVCICS’s charter region, with an additional five percent buffer, that can accommodate its proposed increase of 100 students. Based on enrollment trends at the school, the four districts that represent 44 percent of enrollment have 529 seats estimated available. Fifteen of the 38 districts in the school’s region are at or near their respective NSS caps based on current enrollment. This will limit any significant increase in student enrollment from Chesterfield-Goshen, Conway, Deerfield, Hadley, Hampshire (grades 7-12 for residents of Chesterfield, Goshen, Southampton, Westhampton, and Williamsburg), Hatfield, Hawlemont (Charlemont and Hawley), Leverett, Pelham, Shutesbury, Springfield, Sunderland, Westhampton, Whately, and Williamsburg.
* There are approximately 4,304 seats estimated across SSCPS’s charter region, with an additional five percent buffer, that can accommodate its proposed increase of 225 students. Two of the 23 districts in the school’s region are at or near their respective NSS caps based on current enrollment. This will limit any significant increase in student enrollment from Brockton and Randolph.

**School Amendments to Increase Maximum Enrollment**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School** | | | |
| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Marlborough |
| **Regional or Non-Regional** | Regional | **Charter District** | Clinton, Hudson, Marlborough, Maynard |
| **Year Opened** | 2005 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2010, 2015, 2020 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 966 | **Current Enrollment** | 970 |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 6-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 6-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | FY25 Initial: 791   FY25 Update: 740 | **Current Age of School** | 20 years |
| **Mission Statement:** The Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School will create an atmosphere  of celebration of knowledge where children of all backgrounds and abilities excel in all subjects, especially in math, science, and technology, empowering them to succeed in the workplace of our modern high-tech world. | | | |

**Request and Plan for Implementation**

The board of trustees of AMSA requests approval of an amendment to increase its maximum enrollment by 34 students to reach a maximum enrollment of 1,000 students in grades 6-12. A copy of the school’s request is attached. The school successfully implemented a previous increase in maximum enrollment from 828 to 966 students that the Board granted in February 2010. The school’s current facilities in Marlborough will accommodate the increased enrollment. AMSA reports that approval of its request would support the school's efforts to meet enrollment demand within its region and expand access. The school reported that minimal changes would be required to accommodate an additional 34 students; the school plans to hire staff for the lower school and may make staffing adjustments, as needed, based upon student needs.[[16]](#footnote-17)

AMSA seeks to increase its maximum enrollment over a two-year period beginning fall 2025. The school's waitlist demonstrates demand at all grade levels and supports the proposed increase. The school reported 791 students on the school's waitlist in March 2024 and 918 students on the school's waitlist in March 2023. AMSA currently admits new students in grade 6 and fills vacancies during the school year in grades 6 through 9 in accordance with statutory requirements.

AMSA provides an educational program focused on mathematics, science, and technology. The school encourages student participation in academic competitions and research opportunities with local companies. In 2023, AMSA was awarded a $105,000 grant over three years from the Cummings Foundation to fund the school’s initiative to broaden participation in engineering from underrepresented groups. Through a partnership with the University of Massachusetts Lowell, the program aims to encourage students who identify as women, first-generation college students, or underrepresented students to engage in hands-on engineering activities and learn about potential engineering careers.

**Public Comment**

The Department received comment in support of and in opposition to the school’s request. Five community members, including parents of currently enrolled students, provided comment in support of the school’s request. Comment in opposition to the school’s request was provided by five staff members of Marlborough Public Schools, the Marlborough Educators Association, Superintendent Mary Murphy of Marlborough Public Schools, members of the Marlborough School Committee, Superintendent Steven Meyer of Clinton Public Schools, Superintendent Brian Haas of Maynard Public Schools, Superintendent Brian Reagan of Hudson Public Schools, members of the Hudson School Committee, a former AMSA parent, and two residents from the school’s region. Comment is attached.

**Recommendation**

The school’s request is reasonable and consistent with the charter school statute and regulations. Overall, the submitted amendment request; my intended action to renew the school’s charter, as I have notified you under separate cover in a memorandum dated February 13, 2025; and the Department’s accountability records indicate that the school is an academic success, a viable organization, and faithful to the terms of its charter. I recommend that the Board approve the increase in enrollment to serve an additional 34 students as requested by the school. If the Board votes to grant AMSA’s request, the school will serve students in grades 6-12 with a maximum enrollment of 1,000 students. A motion for approval is attached for your consideration.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers:  A Horace Mann Charter Public School** | | | |
| **Type of Charter** | Horace Mann | **Location** | Boston |
| **Year Opened** | 1998 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2003, 2008, 2013,  2018, 2023 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 448 | **Current Enrollment** | 383[[17]](#footnote-18) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 9-12 | **Current Grade Span** | 9-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | FY25 Initial: 336   FY25 Update: 122 | **Current Age of School** | 27 years |
| **Mission Statement:** The Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers is a college preparatory and vocational high school for Boston students exploring careers in health and health-related professions. The Academy provides a supportive learning environment that promotes respect and embraces diversity. Students will attain the life skills needed to become productive and positive members of society. | | | |

**Request and Plan for Implementation**

The board of trustees of EMK has submitted a request to increase its maximum enrollment by 352 students, effective for the 2025-2026 school year.[[18]](#footnote-19) The Boston School Committee and Boston Teachers Union approved the school’s request as required by 603 CMR 1.10(4)(b). A copy of the school’s request is attached. The school proposes to almost double the size of its grade 9 cohort in its first year of implementation, enrolling 224 ninth grade students in fall 2025, ultimately reaching its proposed maximum enrollment of 800 students in four years. BPS has allocated a temporary space, the former Josiah Quincy Upper School location on Arlington Street, for a portion of EMK during the first two years of the proposed enrollment increase. EMK is working with BPS and the city to identify a long-term site for the school.

The school's waitlist demonstrates demand for enrollment and supports the proposed increase. The school reported 336 students on its waitlist in March 2024 and 362 students on its waitlist in March 2023. EMK currently admits new students in all grades and fills vacancies during the school year in all grades, exceeding statutory requirements.

As noted in the school’s mission, EMK’s educational program provides students with college preparation and career exploration and preparation in health and health-related professions. EMK provides learning opportunities to students in grades 9 and 10 through career and technical education (CTE) exploratory programming. Students in grades 11 and 12 are able to participate in its Chapter 74 Health Assisting program; participants can earn certified nursing assistant (CNA) and emergency medical technician (EMT) certifications.

In January 2024, Bloomberg Philanthropies awarded a $38 million grant, to be distributed over a six-year period, to support a partnership between Boston Public Schools and Massachusetts General Brigham hospital. Supported by the partnership with Massachusetts General Brigham and the grant, the school seeks to increase enrollment in its two existing health career pathways and to create three new pathways in radiologic technology/medical imaging, surgical technology/central sterile processing, and biotechnology/medical laboratory. The partnership will offer EMK students work-based learning, summer and afterschool placements, and career counseling. EMK also plans to expand student access to advanced health career credentials through partnerships with higher education institutions offering aligned college coursework.

**Public Comment**

The Department received comment in support of the amendment from Superintendent Mary Skipper of Boston Public Schools. Comment is attached.

**Recommendation**

The school’s request is reasonable and consistent with the charter school statute and regulations. Overall, the submitted amendment request, the renewal of the school’s charter in 2023, and the Department’s accountability records indicate that the school is an academic success, a viable organization, and faithful to the terms of its charter. I recommend that the Board approve the increase in enrollment to serve an additional 352 students as requested by the school. If the Board votes to grant EMK’s request, the school will serve students in grades 9-12 with a maximum enrollment of 800 students. A motion for approval is attached for your consideration.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School** | | | |
| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Location** | Lynn (Non-Regional) |
| **Year Opened** | 2004 | **Year(s) Renewed** | 2009, 2014, 2019, 2024 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 1,586 | **Current Enrollment** | 1,637[[19]](#footnote-20) |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | K-12 | **Current Grade Span** | K-12 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | FY25 Initial: 1,789   FY25 Update: 1,719 | **Current Age of School** | 21 years |
| **Mission Statement:** Together with families and communities, we create a joyful, academically excellent school that prepares students at KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School with the skills and confidence to pursue the paths they choose - college, career, and beyond - so they can lead fulfilling lives and build a more just world. | | | |

**Request and Plan for Implementation**

The board of trustees of KIPP Lynn is seeking to expand from 1,586 students to 2,036 students over a three year period.[[20]](#footnote-21) In September 2024, the board of trustees of KIPP Lynn submitted a request to increase its maximum enrollment by 1,361 students to reach a maximum enrollment of 2,947 students in grades K-12. After a review of the request, the Department asked the board of trustees for alternative requests because of concerns regarding the size and pace of the expansion. The Department also requested additional information regarding planning if alternative request(s) were submitted. The board of trustees subsequently proposed an increase of 450 students. The school submitted additional documentation including a revised growth plan, a staffing plan, and a budget for an enrollment increase from 1,586 to 2,036 students. The original request and additional documentation for the increase of 450 students are attached for your review.

As evidenced by its charter renewal in 2024, KIPP Lynn has a history of operating in accordance with its mission. KIPP Lynn partners with families as members of the school community, provides students with a mission-aligned environment involving character development and extra-curricular activities, and supports students to pursue the post-secondary paths of their choice. The school provides teachers with professional development to support the use of high-quality instruction and materials to foster student learning; develops student character with social-emotional learning and restorative justice practices; creates an environment where families contribute to school decision-making processes; and prepares students for college and beyond through the school’s programming for current students and alumni.

The school's waitlist demonstrates demand at all grade levels and supports the proposed increase. The school has reported an overall waitlist between 1,789 and 1,917 students over the past five years; the school averages a waitlist of 275 students in kindergarten and 212 students in grade 6, respectively. KIPP Lynn currently admits new students in all grades and fills vacancies during the school year in all grades, exceeding statutory requirements.

KIPP Lynn proposes to increase enrollment over a three-year period beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. The school’s current facilities will accommodate the increased enrollment. To support the enrollment increase, KIPP Lynn plans to grow its teaching staff using strategies that will support the development of internal candidates. KIPP Lynn will use its teaching fellows program as well as financial incentives for current staff to obtain licensure in special education and English as a second language.

**Public Comment**

The Department received comment in support of and in opposition to the school’s request.One hundred and five community members provided comment in support, including families of current and prospective students. Comment in opposition was provided by Mayor Jared Nicholson; Superintendent Evonne Alvarez; and Sheila O’Neil, President of the Lynn Teachers Union in writing and at the Board’s meeting in November 2024. State senator Brendan Crighton and state representatives Daniel Cahill, Peter Capano, and Jenny Balinsky Amini also signed the correspondence from the superintendent in opposition to the request. Senator Crighton and representative Sean Reid, who was elected to replace Mr. Capano, provided public comment at the Board’s meeting in December 2024. Fifteen comments were submitted by the general public in opposition to the request, including six Lynn residents and nine individuals from surrounding communities. Comment is attached.

**Recommendation**

As noted in the request submitted in September 2024, the board of trustees of KIPP Lynn originally requested an expansion from 1,586 to 2,947 students. The Department’s review identified concerns regarding the size and pace of growth proposed. The school submitted a modified request that will permit the school to grow at a reasonable pace and support successful implementation of the school’s educational model.

The school’s modified request is reasonable and consistent with the charter school statute and regulations. Overall, the request, the renewal of the school’s charter in 2024, and the Department’s accountability records indicate that the school is an academic success, is a viable organization, and is faithful to the terms of its charter. I recommend that the Board approve the increase in enrollment to serve an additional 450 students as requested by the school. If the Board votes to grant KIPP Lynn’s request, the school will serve students in grades K-12 with a maximum enrollment of 2,036 students. A motion for approval is attached for your consideration.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School** | | | |
| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Charter Region** | Agawam, Amherst, Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Chesterfield-Goshen, Chicopee, Conway, Deerfield, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Frontier, Gill-Montague, Granby, Greenfield, Hadley, Hampden-Wilbraham, Hampshire, Hatfield, Hawlemont, Holyoke, Leverett, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Mohawk Trail, Northampton, Pelham, Pioneer Valley, Shutesbury, South Hadley, Southampton, Southwick-Tolland-Granville, Springfield, Sunderland, West Springfield, Westfield, Westhampton, Whately, and Williamsburg |
| **Location** | Hadley |
| **Year Opened** | 2007 |
| **Year(s) Renewed** | 2012, 2017, 2022 |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | K-12 |
| **Current Grade Span** | K-12 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 584 |
| **Current Enrollment** | 584 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | FY25 Initial: 190   FY25 Update: 80 |
| **Current Age of School** | 18 years |
| **Mission Statement:** The Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School (PVCICS) is a K-12th grade educational program that produces academically strong students highly proficient in Chinese and English. The program goals are:   * To develop proficiency in Mandarin Chinese. * To maintain and extend students’ proficiency in English. * To develop high levels of academic attainment, meeting or exceeding national and state standards, through rigorous study and instruction aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. * To develop students’ understanding of Chinese culture and the ability to interact successfully with others whose language and/or culture differs from their own.   PVCICS serves the Pioneer Valley region and offers a diverse group of students an innovative educational opportunity unavailable elsewhere in Massachusetts. PVCICS works to disseminate the school’s experiences and serve as a resource for schools trying to develop similar programs. | | | |

**Request and Plan for Implementation**

The board of trustees of PVCICS submitted a request to increase its maximum enrollment to 684 students in grades K-12, an increase of 100 students.[[21]](#footnote-22) A copy of the school’s request is attached. The school seeks to increase the size of its middle and high school grades. The school proposes to maintain its current enrollment distribution across the elementary school grades with 44 students per grade in kindergarten through grade 5. The school proposes to add students in grades 6-12 to reach 60 students per grade. The total enrollment in the high school would increase from approximately 150 students to 240 students. The total enrollment in grades 6-8 would increase by no more than 20 students.

Based on current recruitment and retention trends, as evidenced by the school’s waitlist data and the number of students in grade 8 who continue into the high school, the school can effectively implement its proposed growth plan. PVCICS admits new students in kindergarten, grade 6, and grade 9 and fills vacancies during the school year in kindergarten through grade 6 and in grade 9, exceeding statutory requirements. The school reported 190 students on its waitlist in March 2024, with 22 and 21 students for grades 6 and 9, respectively. In March 2023, the school reported 179 students on its waitlist, with 29 and 26 students for grades 6 and 9, respectively.

PVCICS provides a unique educational option for families in western Massachusetts. The school offers an immersion program in Mandarin Chinese language and culture with the goal of graduating students who are highly proficient in two languages, English and Mandarin Chinese. Students in kindergarten and first grade spend 75 percent of the school day in Chinese immersion classes, where they learn mathematics, science, and Chinese language. Students in grades 2 through 5 receive instruction in Chinese for 50 percent of their day, and students in grades 6 through 12 spend two hours daily in Chinese language classes. All PVCICS students take International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) courses in grades 11 and 12.

PVCICS seeks to provide a more robust high school experience for students with access to additional courses, particularly in International Baccalaureate, and expanded extracurricular activities. The school will hire additional staff to support the increase in high school enrollment. The school acquired a nearby facility in June 2024 to address the size constraints of its current facility for its current enrollment of 584 students. PVCICS indicated that it also plans to add an additional transportation route, as needed, to support student attendance.

**Public Comment**

The Department received comment in support of and in opposition to the school’s request. Comment in support was received from 123 families of current and prospective students, including four graduates, and 21 school employees. State senator Jo Comerford; state representatives Natalie Blais, Mindy Domb, and Lindsay Sabadosa; the Amherst Town Council; Superintendent Dr. Xiomara Herman for the Amherst, Pelham, and Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools; the Amherst and Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committees, and the Pelham School Committee; the Town of Chesterfield; the Frontier Regional School Committee; the Conway School Committee; the Deerfield School Committee; the Sunderland School Committee; and the Whatley School Committee (collectively the Frontier Regional School District and the Union #38 Public School District); the School Committee of Hampshire Regional High School; Superintendent Dr. Conor Driscoll for Hatfield Public Schools; the Leverett Selectboard; the Northampton City Council; Northampton Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra; the Northampton School Committee; the Northampton Association of School Employees; the Westhampton Elementary School Committee; the Williamsburg School Committee; and ten community members, including current and former PVCICS parents submitted comment in opposition. Comment is attached.

**Recommendation for Approval with Conditions**

The school’s request is reasonable and consistent with the charter school statute and regulations. Overall, the submitted amendment request, the renewal of the school’s charter in 2022, and the Department’s accountability records indicate that the school is an academic success and is faithful to the terms of its charter. The Department has identified some concerns within the area of organizational viability regarding governance and transportation planning for the enrollment increase.

The PVCICS board of trustees received an Open Meeting Law complaint related to the board meeting held in September to approve the amendment request.[[22]](#footnote-23) The board repeated its error in a second meeting held in November to address the first Open Meeting Law complaint, resulting in a second, identical Open Meeting Law complaint. The board held a third meeting in December to correct its previous errors and to comply with the Open Meeting Law.

In addition to concerns regarding the board’s knowledge of and compliance with Open Meeting Law requirements, the Department has identified concerns about the board’s ability to provide oversight of the school and to hold its school leaders accountable. The Department held interviews with board and school leadership, and reviewed board materials, including: minutes of board meetings from April 2022 through September 2024, parent complaints submitted to the Department, and public comment provided by current and former PVCICS families. The Department also identified ongoing concerns regarding the board’s knowledge about their role and responsibilities. To strengthen the quality of oversight provided by the board of trustees and their authority as the holder of the charter, the Department requires the board to self-assess its capacity, and engage in training in board responsibilities and Open Meeting Law requirements.

The Department recognizes the benefits of expanding access to regional charter schools through transportation services. Similar regional charter schools have expanded their transportation services during periods of enrollment increase. Regional charter schools with free regional transportation services, such as SSCPS, have demonstrated effectiveness in attracting and retaining a student population comparable to its sending districts. PVCICS has demonstrated some recent progress in increasing the enrollment of new students identified as low income, student with disabilities, and English learners. PVCICS has not exercised additional transportation options to strengthen equitable access for all families within its charter region.

In making my recommendation to grant additional seats to PVCICS, I have considered the advantages of expansion, both for the school and for families and students in its region. I have evaluated the school’s request against the criteria for amendment requests, and I have taken into consideration the school’s performance. I have also considered how granting these seats conditionally will assist the board of trustees to effectively oversee the work of school leadership to implement the expansion. The board of trustees must address the issues that are the focus of these conditions irrespective of whether the amendment is granted.

I recommend that the Board approve the increase in enrollment to serve an additional 100 students with the following conditions related to governance and transportation planning. If the Board votes to grant PVCICS’s request, the school will serve students in grades K-12 with a maximum enrollment of 684 students. I recommend that the following conditions be included as part of the approval of the school’s charter amendment:

1. By June 2, 2025, the board of trustees of Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School will engage in a comprehensive self-evaluation of its capacity and expertise, taking into consideration current term limits for existing board members, possible recruitment of additional members with needed expertise, and staggering trustee terms to ensure board viability during transitions in membership. The board of trustees will submit any proposed bylaw amendments, as necessary, to the Department, [charterschools@mass.gov](mailto:charterschools@mass.gov), by October 31, 2025 for approval.
2. By August 29, 2025, the board of trustees of Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School will engage in training, conducted by an external consultant on the roles and responsibilities of a board of trustees of a charter school. Such consultant and the substance of the training must be submitted to and approved in advance by the Department. In addition, all members of the board of trustees must participate in training on the [Open Meeting Law](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/open-meeting-law-trainings) as offered by the Office of the Attorney General, and provide confirmation of participation, no later than March 31, 2025.
3. By December 31, 2025, the board of trustees of Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School will submit a plan to implement a cost-effective regional transportation plan that is eligible for state reimbursement. In formulating this plan, the board of trustees must consider historical trends in enrollment, attendance, and attrition, in addition to any current disparities in enrollment, retention, and/or attrition.

A motion for approval is attached for your consideration.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **South Shore Charter Public School** | | | |
| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Charter Region** | Abington, Braintree, Brockton, Cohasset, Duxbury, East Bridgewater, Halifax, Hanover, Hingham, Holbrook, Hull, Kingston, Marshfield, Norwell, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Quincy, Randolph, Rockland, Scituate, Weymouth, Whitman-Hanson |
| **Location** | Norwell |
| **Year Opened** | 1995 |
| **Year(s) Renewed** | 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020 |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | K-12 |
| **Current Grade Span** | K-12 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 1,075 | **Current Enrollment** | 1,057 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | FY25 Initial: 658   FY25 Update: 426 | **Current Age of School** | 30 years |
| **Mission Statement:** Inspiring every student to excel in academics, service, and life. | | | |

**Request and Plan for Implementation**

The board of trustees of SSCPS submitted a request to increase its maximum enrollment to 1,300 students in grades K-12, an increase of 225 students. The school reports that this increase is necessary to meet enrollment demand within its region and to expand access. A copy of the school’s request is attached. SSCPS successfully implemented two previous increases in enrollment approved by the Board in the past 13 years. In October 2012, the Board approved an amendment to increase the school’s maximum enrollment from 540 to 610 students and, in January 2016, the Board approved an amendment to increase enrollment from 610 to 1,075 students.

The school's waitlist demonstrates demand at all grade levels and supports the proposed increase. The school reported 658 students on its waitlist in March 2024 and 649 students on its waitlist in March 2023. SSCPS currently admits new students in all grades and fills vacancies during the school year in all grades, exceeding statutory requirements. The school will increase cohort sizes from 80 to 100 students per grade across the entire grade span, with primary entry points in kindergarten and grade 7 during the expansion. SSCPS proposes to increase enrollment over a five-year period beginning in the 2025-2026 school year.

To support the implementation of an enrollment increase, SSCPS proposes expanding its staffing, facility, and transportation. The school plans to hire an additional administrator; teachers; special education teachers; English language development teachers; paraprofessionals; administrative support; building operations; and health, nutrition, and transportation services.

SSCPS occupies three buildings in an office park in Norwell and plans to access additional facility space in its current location. The school intends to secure the unoccupied second floor in its current high school building, which will permit it to occupy the entire building. The school plans to relocate grades 7 and 8 to the high school building, providing additional program space and alleviating overcrowding in its current K-8 location.

The school has offered transportation services across the school’s region for the past three years, provides 15 bus routes, and receives reimbursement for regional transportation. The school anticipates adding five additional buses over the next five years. The school will reassess the transportation needs during its expansion and will adjust its services and routes as needed.

SSCPS has a history of operating in accordance with its mission. The school offers rigorous academic courses. The school supports the social-emotional needs of students through a response to intervention process, health and advisory programs, and clubs and extra-curricular activities. The school integrates community service into its curriculum, and students engage in project-based learning. The school offers Advanced Placement (AP) classes and promotes career readiness through internship programs. The school’s program includes activities and events that allow students to interact with each other across various grade levels, and school staff regularly review academic data and the curriculum to ensure the academic and social-emotional needs of students are met.

**Public Comment**

No comment was received.

**Recommendation**

The school’s request is reasonable and consistent with the charter school statute and regulations. Overall, the submitted amendment request; my intended action to renew the school’s charter, as I have notified you under separate cover in a memorandum dated February 13, 2025; and the Department’s accountability records indicate that the school is an academic success, a viable organization, and is faithful to the terms of its charter. I recommend that the Board approve the increase in enrollment to serve an additional 225 students, as requested by the school. If the Board grants this request, the school will serve students in grades K-12 with a maximum enrollment of 1,300 students. A motion for approval is attached for your consideration.

**Amendment to Charter Region**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School** | | | |
| **Type of Charter** | Commonwealth | **Charter Region** | Agawam, Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Erving, Frontier, Gateway, Gill-Montague, Granby, Greenfield, Hadley, Hampden-Wilbraham, Hampshire, Hatfield, Holyoke, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Mohawk Trail, Monroe, Monson, Northampton, Palmer, Pioneer Valley, Ralph C. Mahar, Rowe, South Hadley, Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional, Springfield, Tantasqua, Ware, West Springfield, and Westfield. |
| **Location** | South Hadley |
| **Year Opened** | 1996 |
| **Year(s) Renewed** | 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021 |
| **Chartered Grade Span** | 7-12 |
| **Current Grade Span** | 7-12 |
| **Maximum Enrollment** | 400 |
| **Current Enrollment** | 397 |
| **Students on Waitlist** | FY25 Initial: 171   FY25 Update: 43 |
| **Current Age of School** | 29 years |
| **Mission Statement:** PVPA offers its students intensive exposure to the performing arts within the context of an excellent college preparatory curriculum. | | | |

**Request and Plan for Implementation**

The board of trustees of PVPA requests a reduction in the number of districts in the school’s region from 35 to 18, effective for the 2025-2026 school year. A copy of the school’s request is attached. PVPA requests a region that includes Agawam, Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Granby, Hadley, Hampden-Wilbraham, Hampshire Regional, Hatfield, Holyoke, Ludlow, Northampton, South Hadley, Springfield, West Springfield, and Westfield.[[23]](#footnote-24) Students who live in the district(s) specified receive a preference in enrollment. Students who live in a community outside the districts named in a school’s charter may apply for admission, be admitted, and attend if space is available.

The school provides students intensive exposure to the performing arts within a college preparatory curriculum. All incoming PVPA students participate in “arts core,” where students rotate through short courses focused on dance, music, theater, and visual arts, and engage in activities focused on creative collaboration and skill-building in each discipline. Ninth graders decide to concentrate in one of the four areas by the end of the school year.

The school wants to increase the number of bus routes it offers and to eliminate student transportation fees. PVPA reports the size of the current region limits student access to transportation, decreases student attendance rates, and increases attrition rates. Attendance rates declined over the past four years from 95 percent to 90 percent. The attrition rate also increased, with 11 percent of students, on average, not returning to the school during the same time period. The school reviewed historical trends of enrollment and identified that approximately 85 percent of its current student population resides within the smaller region it proposes. The school currently offers three fee-based bus routes and waives the fee for students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. The school proposes to eliminate transportation fees and add at least five new routes to transport all students who reside within the proposed region who want school transportation. The school’s proposed transportation plan would be eligible for regional transportation reimbursement.

**Public Comment**

The Department received comment in support of the school’s request. Twenty-eight families of current and prospective students and two staff members of PVPA submitted comment. No comment in opposition was received. Comment is attached.

**Recommendation for Approval with a Condition**

The school’s request is reasonable and consistent with the charter school statute and regulations. Overall, the submitted amendment request, the renewal of the school’s charter in 2021, and the Department’s accountability records indicate that the school is an academic success, a viable organization, and faithful to the terms of its charter. I recommend that the Board approve reducing the number of districts in the school’s charter with the following condition related to transportation planning. If the Board votes to grant PVPA’s request, the school’s charter region will include Agawam, Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Granby, Hadley, Hampden-Wilbraham, Hampshire Regional, Hatfield, Holyoke, Ludlow, Northampton, South Hadley, Springfield, West Springfield, and Westfield. I recommend that the following condition be included as part of the approval of the school’s charter amendment:

By May 1, 2025, the board of trustees of Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School will submit a plan to implement a cost-effective regional transportation plan that is eligible for state reimbursement. In formulating this plan, the board of trustees must consider historical trends in enrollment, attendance, and attrition, in addition to any current disparities in enrollment, retention, and/or attrition.

A motion for approval is attached for your consideration.

If you have any questions regarding these amendments or require additional information, please contact Alyssa Hopkins, Assistant Director of the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign; Alison Bagg, Director of the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign; Regina Robinson, Deputy Commissioner; or me.

Attachments

Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School:

Correspondence from Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School

Public comment

Motion

Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers: A Horace Mann Charter Public School:

Correspondence from Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers:

A Horace Mann Charter Public School

Public comment

Motion

KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School:

Correspondence from KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School

Public comment

Motion

Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School:

Correspondence from Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School

Public comment

Motion

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School:

Correspondence from Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

Public comment

Motion

South Shore Charter Public School

Correspondence from South Shore Charter Public School

Motion

1. My recommendation for PVCICS includes three conditions related to governance and one condition related to planning for transportation services. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. At the time of each school’s submission to the Department, pursuant to 603 CMR 1.10(5), copies of all requests were provided to the districts identified in their respective charter region. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The Charter School Dashboard is a new tool that provides unique data displays for charter schools. The Dashboard was developed in a collaboration between the Department and the Executive Office of Education Information Technology. As a new data tool, there may be data anomalies or missing fields. We apologize for any unintended omissions or errors. The Dashboard will be updated as issues are identified. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Horace Mann charter schools receive tuition as set forth in the school’s memorandum of understanding with the school committee where the charter school is located. Horace Mann charter schools, therefore, are not subject to net school spending caps. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. NSS does not include spending funded by grants or most spending related to capital facilities, transportation, or adult education. In the case of municipal school districts, NSS can include spending by other municipal departments to support schools. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Districts subject to the higher 18 percent NSS cap are reported annually at: [Districts Subject to Changes in the Charter School Cap - Annual Ranking](https://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/enrollment/CapIncrease/). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Section 89(i)(2) of G.L. c. 71 provides as follows with respect to NSS.

   In any fiscal year, no public school district's total charter school tuition payment to commonwealth charter schools shall exceed 9 per cent of the district's net school spending; provided, however, that a public school district's total charter tuition payment to commonwealth charter schools shall not exceed 18 per cent of the district's net school spending if the school district qualifies under paragraph (3).

   Section 89(i)(3) of G.L. c. 71, referred to in the language quoted above, provides as follows.

   In any fiscal year, if the board determines based on student performance data collected pursuant to section 1I, said district is in the lowest 10 per cent of all statewide student performance scores released in the 2 consecutive school years before the date the charter school application is submitted, the school district's total charter school tuition payment to commonwealth charter schools may exceed 9 per cent of the district's net school spending but shall not exceed 18 per cent. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. The facility component of charter tuition is excluded from this calculation because sending districts are fully reimbursed by the Commonwealth for this amount. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Charter schools do not receive tuition for students enrolled above the school’s maximum enrollment. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. The charter school statute at G.L. c. 71, § 89(i)(3), addresses the calculation of NSS caps when a district exits the lowest 10 percent.

    If a district is no longer in the lowest 10 per cent, the net school spending cap shall be 9 per cent, unless the district net school spending was above 9 per cent in the year prior to moving out of the lowest 10 per cent in which case the net school spending cap shall remain at the higher level plus enrollment previously approved by the board. The department shall determine and make available to the public a list of the school districts in said lowest 10 per cent.

    In short, if such a district’s charter enrollment has surpassed the 9 percent NSS cap, that district’s NSS cap must be set to accommodate all previously approved enrollment. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. AMSA, a regional charter school, includes a district in its region that is identified as performing in the lowest 10 percent statewide, Marlborough. Marlborough, however, is not projected to exceed the 9 percent NSS even if all of the school’s proposed increase in enrollment, 34 students, were to come from Marlborough. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. NSS spending cap limitations and proven provider requirements are not applicable to Horace Mann charter schools. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. The Department defines expected performance in the three guiding areas of charter school accountability: faithfulness to charter, academic program success, and organizational viability through the [Charter School Performance Criteria](https://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/performance-criteria.docx). The Department evaluates these ten criteria through the use of quantitative and qualitative data and affirmative evidence presented by the school. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Student groups defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 89(i)(3) include students identified as low income, English learners, students with disabilities, and at-risk student populations. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. AMSA, PVCICS, and SSCPS must follow Department guidance issued annually related to enrollment limitations for districts at or near their NSS cap. Pursuant to 603 CMR 1.05(10)(b), residents of districts that are at their NSS cap remain on the waitlists of Commonwealth charter schools unless the student is a sibling of a currently enrolled student. The Department has published [enrollment guidance for the upcoming 2025-2026 school year](https://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/enrollment/fy2026/pre-enrollment-guide.docx). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Teachers at AMSA voted in July 2014 to unionize with Teamsters Local 170. The school’s board of trustees and administration engage in negotiations with the union to establish three-year teacher contracts. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. The school currently serves 383 students in grades 9 through 12 across two campuses. Horace Mann charter schools enter into agreements with their local school committee for services, including facilities. EMK’s current facility arrangement with BPS cannot accommodate the school’s maximum enrollment of 448 students. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. EMK may return in the future with a request to add grades 7 and 8 to its grade span based on BPS’ ongoing grade reconfiguration efforts. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. As of October 1, 2024, the school was overenrolled by 51 students and, as a result, is out of compliance with the terms of its charter. Charter schools do not receive tuition for students enrolled above the school’s maximum enrollment. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. The Board has granted KIPP Lynn several expansions since its original charter award in 2004. In December 2009, the Board approved an amendment to add grades 9 through 12 and to increase the school’s maximum enrollment from 320 to 750 students. In February 2011, the Board granted an additional charter to the board of trustees for a K-8 school located in Boston. KIPP Academy Boston Charter School (KIPP Boston) and KIPP Lynn form a charter school network managed by a regional office who are public employees of KIPP Lynn or KIPP Boston. In February 2015, the Board approved an amendment for KIPP Lynn to add grades K through 4 and to increase the school’s maximum enrollment from 850 to 1,586 students. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. In February 2013, the Board approved an amendment to add grades 9 through 12 to PVCICS’s grade span and to increase the school’s maximum enrollment from 300 to 584 students, instead of the requested 684 students. The Commissioner’s recommendation indicated that the school could return at its 2017 renewal with a request for additional enrollment after demonstrating demand for high school grades. The school submitted subsequent amendment requests for substantially larger increases that were not granted. See [6/25/2019 BESE Regular Meeting: Request by Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School for Review of Commissioner's Decision](https://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2019/2019-06/item9.html) for a history of the school’s requests since the Board’s approval in 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Boards of trustees for charter schools are required to participate in training on the state’s Open Meeting Law at the beginning of every term of board service. The length of trustees terms is determined by the bylaws of a charter school board of trustees. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. PVPA is not permitted to unenroll students who either live in or move to a community that is not named in the proposed region. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)