



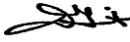
Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminister Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Enclosure 4f3
January 5, 2015

January 12, 2015

TO: Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

FROM: Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner 

RE: **International Charter School - Charter Amendment**

International Charter School (ICS) is an independent charter public school in Pawtucket. The school opened in 2001 and currently enrolls approximately 324 students in kindergarten through grade five. The school is authorized to serve students in kindergarten through grade eight but it has not yet expanded to serve middle school grades due to facility constraints. Approximately sixty (60) percent of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch, eight (8) percent are students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and thirty-eight (38) percent are English language learners (ELLs). In 2014, ICS was identified as a typical school through Rhode Island's school classification system.

Amendment Request

International Charter School requested an amendment to its charter to increase the school's approved enrollment beginning in the 2015-16 school year. The school currently serves 324 students and is authorized to serve 486 students. The school desires to serve an additional 306 students for a total of 792 students in kindergarten through grade eight.

In accordance with C-2-1 (a) of the Board of Regents Regulations Governing Rhode Island Public Charter Schools, such major changes in the school's operations require the action of the Board of Education.

International Charter School has achieved sustained high academic performance, demonstrated additional demand for the school, and provided a viable operational plan.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to approve the International Charter School amendment permitting the school to enroll an additional 306 students in kindergarten through grade eight.

RI Charter Public School Amendment Request: International Charter School

Enrolling Communities: Statewide

Grade Level: K to 5 (current)
K to 8 (authorized)

Location of School: Pawtucket

Charter Type: Independent

Current Approval: 486 students **Proposed Increase:** 306 students **Maximum if amended:** 792 students

Mission

The mission of the International Charter School is to integrate the languages and cultures of the Portuguese-, Spanish-, and English-speaking communities it serves by teaching all students in two languages, and by helping children develop an appreciation of other cultures. Children learn to work collaboratively from their multiple backgrounds and by striving towards high standards of academic achievement. Everyone is part of a community of learners, engaging in inquiry about the world, themselves, and others.

School Overview

International Charter School (ICS) is a K-5 independent charter public school in Pawtucket. The school opened in 2001 and was most recently renewed in Spring 2012.

In 2006, ICS was authorized to expand and serve students in grades 6-8, with a maximum enrollment of 486. To date, ICS has not expanded programming beyond grade 5 due primarily to the capacity of its current facility.

ICS enrolls students statewide. Approximately 40% come from Pawtucket, 30% from Providence, 10% from Central Falls; the remaining 20% reside in twelve (12) other communities throughout the state. 60% of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch, 68% are Latino or African American, 8% are students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and 38% are English language learners (ELLs).

Some highlights of the ICS program include:

- ICS provides dual language programming for all students, offering Spanish/English and Portuguese/English programs;
- ICS is preparing to offer International Baccalaureate (IB) programming. IB is an internationally renowned framework for education that “help[s] develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world.” ICS will be the first school in Rhode Island to offer the IB Primary Years Program (PYP) or Middle Years Program (MYP).

Amendment Request

Pursuant to Regulation C-2-1(a) of the *RI Board of Regents Regulations Governing Charter Schools*, International Charter School (ICS) requests permission from the Board of Education to amend its charter to allow an increase in maximum enrollment.

ICS requests to increase cohort size from 54 students to 88 students per grade while it expands to serve grades 6-8. In 2015, ICS proposes a modest increase of eighteen (18) students beyond current enrollment. At full implementation, the maximum proposed enrollment is seven hundred ninety-two (792) students, which is a maximum enrollment increase of three hundred six (306) students beyond current approval.

Evaluation Procedures

For charter schools seeking amendments that increase maximum enrollment, RIDE's Office of Charter Schools looks to answer three key questions:

- Does the charter public school have a track record of sustained high performance?
- Is there sufficient demand for the school?
- Has the school developed an operational plan that will enable it to expand with fidelity?

To evaluate academic performance, RIDE conducts a comprehensive review of available evidence, including RIDE school classifications, NECAP proficiency, growth rates, graduation rates (for high schools), and results from recent charter renewal decisions.

To evaluate demand, RIDE examines lottery data over multiple years to assess whether the school has sufficient demand to meet proposed enrollment targets.

To evaluate a school's operational plan, RIDE reviews board meeting minutes, school materials (including staffing plans and budgets), and other strategic planning documents. The purpose of the review is to understand how the school will be able to carry out its expansion plan.

Commissioner's Recommendation

The Commissioner recommends approval of International Charter School's amendment request. The decision is based on evidence of sustained high academic performance, demand for the school, and a sound operational plan for expansion.

Sustained high academic performance:

School classification: In each of the past three years (2012-2014), International Charter School was classified as "Typical" under Rhode Island's school classification system.

Proficiency: Most recent NECAP data indicates that 63% of ICS students are proficient in reading and 55% are proficient in math.

Growth: The Rhode Island Growth Model enables a measure of how well students perform compared against other students who performed similarly in prior years. A school with a median Student Growth Percentile (SGP) between 40 and 60 is achieving a typical or expected amount of growth. International Charter School has a median Student Growth Percentile (SGP) of 50 in reading and a median SGP of 60 in math. These growth scores are within the bounds of typical growth for Rhode Island schools.

Renewal: The school's charter was renewed in 2012, and has no outstanding conditions.

Demand: International Charter School is substantially oversubscribed. In the March 2014 enrollment lottery, ICS received 779 applications for 54 available seats, or roughly fourteen (14) applicants for each available seat.

Operational Plan: The ICS amendment request is for increased enrollment in an authorized school, and does not amend its authorized grade span. The governance structure at ICS would remain the same. The school has presented strategic planning documents that increase staffing capacity and budget commitments to support expansion into the middle school program, and to meet International Baccalaureate (IB) requirements in all grades. In addition, the school and governing board has established relationships with facilities development partners as they seek a solution for a new facility that would enable full implementation of the program.