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

Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

Enclosure 4f
May 28, 2015

June 9, 2015

TO: Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

FROM: Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner

RE: **Motion to grant Final Charter – RISE Prep Mayoral Academy**

I present for your consideration a recommendation to grant final approval to RISE Prep Mayoral Academy.

RISE Prep Mayoral Academy is a proposed Mayoral Academy with a mission to prepare students in grades K – 8 for success in college and a life of community engagement. The charter proposal for RISE Prep Mayoral Academy was submitted on May 16, 2014. The proposal was reviewed and substantively considered by RIDE staff and an advisory committee, in accordance with the charter school proposal review process. The proposal was made available for public comment for a 60-day period. Two public hearings were held, on the evenings of June 10 and June 12, 2014.

On October 14, 2014, RISE Prep Mayoral Academy received preliminary approval from the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education.

Upon issuance of preliminary approval, the founding governing board and staff of the proposed school commenced actions appropriate to meet all readiness criteria and related requirements. RISE Prep Mayoral Academy has satisfactorily completed the readiness tasks as fully defined in regulation.

Having completed these readiness criteria, RISE Prep Mayoral Academy seeks authorization to operate as a charter public school for a maximum term of five years.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT, the Council Elementary and Secondary Education moves to issue a final Charter to RISE Prep Mayoral Academy and authorize its operation for a maximum term of five years (5) beginning in the 2015-2016 school year and ending in the 2019-2020 school year, in accordance with all terms and conditions of the final Charter.

DRAFT

Rhode Island Charter School Proposal:
RISE Prep Mayoral Academy

Enrolling Communities: Woonsocket, Burrillville, North Smithfield

Grade Levels: K-8

Location of School: Woonsocket

Charter Type: Mayoral Academy

Establishing Town Administrator: Paulette Hamilton, North Smithfield

Mission

Through a structured learning environment, rigorous academic curriculum, and character education, RISE Prep Mayoral Academy educates K-8 students for success in college and a life of community engagement.

Enrollment Plan

Year 1	2015-16	K	81 students
Year 2	2016-17	K-1	162 students
Year 3	2017-18	K-2	243 students
Year 4	2018-19	K-3	324 students
Year 5	2019-20	K-4	405 students
Eventual Enrollment		K-8	729 students

Program Overview

According to the proposal, RISE Prep Mayoral Academy (RISE) will offer a rigorous academic program that prepares its students for the demands of a college preparatory high school and success in college. The proposal for RISE Mayoral Academy was submitted by a group of educators and community leaders, including Lisa Baldelli-Hunt, Mayor of Woonsocket; Paulette Hamilton, Town Administrator of North Smithfield; Rosalind Murphy, Building Excellent Schools Fellow and proposed Head of School; and Michael Magee, CEO of Rhode Island Mayoral Academies.

- ⇨ RISE Mayoral Academy proposes to open with 81 kindergarten students, growing a grade each year until a maximum enrollment of 405 students is reached in the first five-year term. Over time, the school plans to grow into a K-8 school, for a maximum enrollment of 729.

- ⇨ The founders refer to three core principles that will drive the educational program: 1) All students can achieve at high levels; 2) College preparation starts in kindergarten; 3) Character education has a significant impact on student achievement. The school proposes to provide a “joyful and structured culture that emphasizes the school’s RISE values – Respect, Integrity, Self-Determination, and Excellence.”

- ⇨ The proposal was deemed by a committee of reviewers to have met all requirements, and to have provided a detailed and robust educational program that is likely to lead to exceptional academic outcomes in its students.

- ⇨ Building Excellent Schools (BES) is a Boston-based, nationally recognized school leadership training program. BES Fellows have created and led some of the nation's highest performing open-enrollment public schools. Through the relationship with BES, RISE Mayoral Academy leadership will be provided with ongoing professional development opportunities and a network of supportive and successful school leaders.

- ⇨ RISE Mayoral Academy will allocate 50% of seats to urban students from Woonsocket, and 50% of seats to non-urban students from Burrillville or North Smithfield. The goal of this enrollment plan is to create an intentionally diverse, regional school model.

- ⇨ If approved, RISE Mayoral Academy will leverage partnerships with Building Excellent Schools (BES) as well as with Rhode Island Mayoral Academies (RIMA), which provides school startup supports and a local network of school-based leaders.

April 2014
- ✓ Submit complete proposal
- ✓ Preliminary review for completeness

May 21 –August 6
- ✓ Two public hearings
- ✓ 60 day public comment period

June-July
- ✓ Comprehensive review of proposal by committee
- ✓ Capacity interviews with founders

September
- ✓ Commissioner's Recommendation
- ✓ Preliminary Approval by Board of Education

May 2015
- ✓ Completion of all readiness requirements

May/June 2015
- ✓ Commissioner's Recommendation
- ☐ Final Approval by Board of Education

Public Comment

The 60-day public comment period for RISE Prep Mayoral Academy began on May 21, 2014. Two public hearings were held: on June 10 and June 12 at the Woonsocket Senior Center in Woonsocket. RIDE received comments from 73 individuals during that period. 50 individuals were in support; 23 were opposed.

Since that period, RIDE has received fifteen (15) other letters or emails indicating concerns or opposing the RISE Mayoral Academy, including resolutions from the North Smithfield school committee and North Smithfield town council. This correspondence includes multiple letters from the same individual, as well as letters with multiple co-signers. During this period, RIDE also received five (5) photos and quotations from families in support of RISE Prep.

Capacity Interview

The capacity interview was held on July 23, 2014. Founding group in attendance: Mayor Lisa Baldelli-Hunt (proposed board chair at the time); Michael Magee (CEO of RIMA); Rosalind Murphy (proposed Head of School); and David Lauck (proposed support staff).

Governance

On December 19, 2014, Town Administrator Paulette Hamilton of North Smithfield notified RIDE that she had assumed the role of Chair of RISE Mayoral Academy "along with any ongoing role required of a mayor or elected town administrator under Rhode Island General Laws Chapter 16-77.4."

Variance/ Waiver Requests

"RISE Mayoral Academy elects to have the subsection in RIGL 16-77.4.2 (13 i-iii) not apply to its teachers, administrators, and employees. These include that:

> (i) Teachers and administrators in a mayoral academy shall be entitled to prevailing wages and benefits as enjoyed by other public school teachers and administrators;
>
> (ii) Teachers and administrators in a mayoral academy shall be entitled to participate in the state teachers' retirement system under chapter 8 of title 36; and
>
> (iii) Employment in a mayoral academy shall be considered "service" as that term is defined in chapter 16 of this title.

RISE Mayoral Academy has made these choices in order that it may have the maximum flexibility to design and implement hiring, compensation, and retention policies to assemble and manage excellent teams of professionals, and to allocate funds and time to the activities most likely to generate exceptional results […] RISE Mayoral Academy is committed to fair hiring and compensation practices, similarly implemented by other successful mayoral academies."

Preliminary Approval

Preliminary approval is an endorsement from the Board of Education on the conceptual design of a charter public school proposal. It does not confer a Charter or the authority to operate a charter public school. In order to operate a charter public school, the proposed school must meet specific "readiness criteria" and receive a final Charter from the Board of Education. The RI Board of Education granted preliminary approval to RISE Prep Mayoral Academy on October 14, 2014.

Final Approval

C-1-4 of the *Regulations Governing Rhode Island Public Charter Schools* outlines criteria that applicants must meet in order to obtain final approval. Upon meeting these criteria, the Board of Education may issue a Final Charter and authorize the school to operate. An affirmative vote will confer to the charter school's board the legal authority to operate as a charter public school program and a local education agency (LEA) in Rhode Island. RISE Prep Mayoral Academy has completed all readiness tasks required for final approval.

Regulatory Requirements for Final Charter Approval

C-1-4 (a)	Articles of Incorporation	RISE Prep Mayoral Academy incorporated with the RI Office of the Secretary of State on November 18, 2014.
C-1-4 (b)	Review of financial plan	The RISE Prep Mayoral Academy's updated five-year budget and financial plan has been reviewed and deemed satisfactory.
C-1-4(c)	Establish governance structure (e.g. board of trustees or directors)	The RISE Prep Mayoral Academy governing board formed and began holding regular public meetings in November of 2014.
C-1-4(d)	Hire qualified chief administrator	The RISE Prep Mayoral Academy governing board has hired a qualified chief administrator, Rosalind Murphy, who is expected to complete her certification via program completion by July 1, 2015.
C-1-4(e)	Staffing plan in place consistent with school design	An updated staffing plan was reviewed and is consistent with the original proposal, the school's design and educational program, and the school's budget and financial plans.
C-1-4(f)	Evidence of interest in enrollment	RISE Prep Mayoral Academy conducted an enrollment lottery in March 2015. RI regulations require evidence of interest in enrollment from 50% of the target quantity of students, which has been met. 107 prospective students applied for 81 available kindergarten seats. As of May 20, 2015, 41 students from Woonsocket have enrolled, along with 13 students from Burrillville and North Smithfield.
C-1-4(g)	Identify an appropriate building for use	RISE Prep Mayoral Academy has identified an appropriate building, secured agreement on the terms and form of lease, and provided written, signed assurances that the founders understand and will comply with all requirements for operating and maintaining a public school building.
C-1-4(h)	Final Charter	A draft of the Final Charter has been prepared.
C-1-4(i)	Execute Commissioner-approved contract with comprehensive service or management provider	RISE Prep Mayoral Academy is not contracting with a comprehensive service or management provider.