



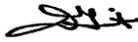
Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Enclosure 2g4
August 25, 2014

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TO: Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

FROM: Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner 

RE: Renewal of The Academy for Career Exploration

The Academy for Career Exploration (ACE) is a district charter school located in Providence. The school opened in 1997 and serves 225 Providence students in grades 9 – 12. The school’s current charter term expires at the conclusion of the 2014-2015 school year.

In accordance with the Rhode Island Board of Regents’ Regulations Governing Public Charter Schools C-4-3, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) coordinated the process of evaluating ACE’s performance during this charter term to determine the merits of the charter. Continuation of ACE’s charter is dependent upon the Commissioner’s recommendation and subsequent approval of that recommendation by the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCESS SUMMARY

In order to support the Commissioner’s renewal recommendation to the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, the Office of Charter Schools conducts a review of the school’s performance based on the three following core questions:

- 1) Is the school’s educational program an academic success?
- 2) Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for academic success?
- 3) Is the school a viable organization?

The **first** question of the review considers relevant student outcome measures using the most generalizable data available. Those measures include Mathematics and Reading NECAP performance, IDEA SPP indicators, ESEA waiver requirements, and, if applicable, student-level growth and ACCESS proficiency.

The **second** question of the review considers implementation relative to the standards set forth in the Board of Regents Basic Education Program (BEP), including and in addition to instructional leadership, classroom instruction, and curriculum development. Evidence for this portion of the review is gathered through a three-day site visit accompanied by a document review.

The **third** question of the review considers organizational viability, including parent/guardian satisfaction, student attendance and whether or not a school is using public funds responsibly. RIDE staff review the school's financial audits over the course of the charter term as well as other relevant documentation on the school's compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

The school completed a Renewal Application. This application provides the school an opportunity to:

- 1) Present any important new or supplemental information pertaining to the above guiding questions, to enable a more comprehensive assessment of school performance; and
- 2) Articulate the school's strategies and capacities for sustaining success and continuing to improve over the next charter term.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW RESULTS SUMMARY

- ❖ **The Academy for Career Exploration demonstrated progress improving the academic success of its students during the charter term.** ACE outperformed its sending districts and demographically similar schools in reading; however, ACE performed below typical in mathematics compared with demographically similar schools. The school's performance as measured against its past performance is above typical in reading and typical in mathematics. ACE received a "Typical" school classification on the 2013 school report card and a "Leading" school classification on the 2014 school report card.
- ❖ **The Academy for Career Exploration demonstrated progress improving the conditions for academic success during the charter term.** ACE demonstrated some improvement in the area of school leadership, curriculum alignment and documentation, and staff evaluation. However, the school continues to develop its practices and systems for school leader accountability, fiscal oversight, and implementation of instructional strategies.
- ❖ **The Academy for Career Exploration demonstrated it is a viable organization.** The school has received an unqualified opinion by the private accounting firm that conducted the school audit for each year of operations although it has received management letters with each of the previous two audits. The school has remained compliant with federal and state requirements. Additionally, ACE has maintained typical levels of school attendance and chronic absenteeism slightly below the statewide average.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education moves to renew the charter of the Academy for Career Exploration for a term of up to five (5) years, to operate in accordance with and comply with the condition set forth in this recommendation from July 1, 2015 to June 30th, 2020, as presented.

This renewal is subject to the following conditions being met by or before December 15, 2014:

1. Academy for Career Exploration Board of Directors must establish practices for holding the school leader accountable as set forth in Standard 2.1.a.4.
2. Academy for Career Exploration Board of Directors must establish policies for fiscal management and controls as set forth in Standard 2.1.a.5.
3. Academy for Career Exploration Board of Directors must align its board practices to its bylaws as set forth in Standard 2.1.a.6

This renewal is subject to the following condition being met by or before July 1, 2015:

1. Academy for Career Exploration Board of Directors must articulate an agreement for services provided by the Providence Public School District as set forth in RIGL § 16-77.2-2(8).

These conditions shall be removed upon a review of evidence indicating the conditions have been met.

Attachment 1

1 IS THE SCHOOL'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?			2012-2013	2013-2014
1.1	Is the school making measurable gains in math and ELA NECAP Performance? - Model I	Math	Typical	Typical
		Reading	Below	Below
		Progress toward targets at this point in the term.		
1.2	Is the school making measurable gains in math and ELA NECAP Performance? - Model II	Math	Typical	
		Reading	Above	
1.2	Is the school outperforming its students' sending districts as measured by NECAP?	Math	Typical	Typical
		Reading	Above	Above
1.3	Is the school outperforming demographically similar schools as measured by NECAP?	Math	Below	Below
		Reading	Above	Above
1.4	Is the school's student-level growth percentile higher than the state's median (elementary and middle school only)?	Math	Growth is not calculated for Rhode Island high schools.	
		Reading		
1.5	Are students with Limited English Proficiency making typical growth in English fluency as measured by ACCESS?		Fewer than 30 students identified as ELL.	
1.6	Is the school meeting its mission-specific educational goals?		No MSG established during the term.	
			2013 Report Card	2014 Report Card
1.7	Is the school meeting federally required academic performance targets?		Typical	Leading

Sending District = A weighted average of a school's sending district(s)' proficiency levels. The Academy for Career Exploration draws students from Providence.

Similar Schools = An estimate of the proficiency level of Rhode Island schools with similar numbers of ELL, SPED, and FRPL students as The Academy for Career Exploration.