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 9b1
May 12, 2014

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TO: Members of the R.I. Board of Education

FROM: Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner

RE: Motion to grant Charter – Southside Elementary Charter School

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The charter proposal for Southside Elementary Charter School was submitted on March 1, 2013. The proposal was reviewed and substantively considered by officers at RIDE 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 24 and June 26, 2013.

On October 7, 2013, Southside Elementary Charter School received preliminary approval from the Board of Education.

Upon issuance of preliminary approval, the founding team of the proposed school commenced actions appropriate to meet all readiness criteria and related requirements. Southside Elementary Charter School has satisfactorily completed the readiness tasks as fully defined in regulation.

Having completed these readiness criteria, Southside Elementary Charter School seeks authorization to operate as a charter public school for a maximum term of five years.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Education moves to issue a final Charter to Southside Elementary Charter School and authorizes its operation for a maximum term of five (5) years beginning in the 2014-2015 school year and ending in the 2018-2019 school year, in accordance with all terms and conditions of the final Charter, as presented

Rhode Island Charter School Proposal:
Southside Elementary Charter School

Catchment Area: Providence

Grade Level: K-5

Location of School: Providence

Charter Type: Independent
Establishing Entity: Amos House

Mission

Southside Elementary Charter School provides a diverse group of Providence kindergarten through fifth grade students with a solid step towards college and community leadership. Students learn to read, write, think logically, and problem solve on grade level within a curriculum that emphasizes academic rigor, excellence, and community engagement in an extended school day and school year.

Enrollment Plan

Year 1	2014-15	24 students
Year 2	2015-16	48 students
Year 3	2016-17	72 students
Year 4	2017-18	96 students
Year 5	2018-19	120 students
Eventual Enrollment		144 students

Program Overview

According to the proposal, Southside Elementary Charter School (SECS) will offer a rigorous academic program that prepares its students for college and community leadership. It will be guided by a belief that all students can achieve at high levels if offered a rigorous and supportive program. The proposal for Southside Elementary Charter School was submitted by a group of educators and community members with a broad degree of experience working with children in South Providence, including Dan Corley, Head of School of Community Preparatory School; Eileen Hayes, CEO of Amos House; and Trish Martins, Director of Education at Bradley Schools.

- ⇨ Southside Elementary Charter School proposes to open with 24 kindergarten students, growing a grade each year until a maximum of 120 students is reached in the first five-year term. The school plans to grow to a fifth grade in the school's sixth year, for a maximum enrollment of 144. The founders believe that its small size will lead to a personalized school experience and a strong, family-like culture at the school.
- ⇨ The founders propose to run an extended school day, from 7:45 until 4:15, and an extended school year, at 190 days.
- ⇨ The school will be divided into "learning families" of K-1, 2-3 and 4-5 with two certified grade-level teachers working in pairs and a maximum instructional ratio of 12:1. Students may move between grades according to individual needs, and teachers will work with the same students for two years.

- ⇨ SECS's enrollment lottery includes a preference for homeless students, with access and outreach supported through a relationship with Amos House.

- ⇨ If approved, Southside Elementary Charter School will lease space in the Community Prep facility on Somerset St in Providence. Apart from this leasing arrangement, there are no plans for a formal relationship between Community Prep and Southside Elementary Charter School. All SECS functions, including instruction, staffing, enrollment, record-keeping, management of finances and community outreach, will be the responsibility of SECS.

March 2013
- ✓ Submit complete proposal
- ✓ Preliminary review for completeness

May-July 2013
- ✓ Two hearings
- ✓ 60 day public comment period

June-July 2013
- ✓ Comprehensive review of proposal by committee
- ✓ Capacity interviews with founders

October 2013
- ✓ Commissioner's Recommendation
- ✓ Preliminary Approval by Board of Education

May 2014
- ✓ Completion of all readiness requirements

May 2014
- ✓ Commissioner's Recommendation
- ☐ Final Approval by Board of Education

Public Comment

The 60-day public comment period for SECS began on May 28, 2013 and closed on July 26, 2013. Two public hearings were held: on June 24 at the MET, 325 Public St in Providence; and on June 26 at PCTA, 41 Fricker St. in Providence.

RIDE received comments from 25 individuals during that period. 24 individuals were in support; one opposed. Supporters noted how SECS would expand the range of high-quality educational opportunities for Providence students, and will be positioned to leverage community partnerships with organizations like Ready to Learn Providence, Amos House, and CCRI.

Capacity Interview

The capacity interview was held on September 4, 2013. Founding group in attendance: Dan Corley (proposed board member), Trish Martins (special education provider), Judy Ryan (proposed board member), Eileen Hayes (representative of establishing entity), Delia Rodriguez-Masjoan (proposed board member).

Variance/ Waiver Requests

No variances or waivers are requested.

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 Southside Elementary Charter School on Oct 7, 2013.

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. Southside Elementary Charter School has completed all readiness tasks required for final approval.

Regulatory Requirements for Final Charter Approval

C-1-4 (a)	Articles of Incorporation	SECS filed incorporation documents with the RI Secretary of State on October 18, 2013.
C-1-4 (b)	Review of financial plan by RI Office of the Auditor General	The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) has reviewed SECS's five-year budget and financial plan. OAG has submitted a letter indicating that its review is complete and the SECS plans are satisfactory.
C-1-4(c)	Establish governance structure (i.e. board of trustees or directors)	The SECS governing board has formed and began holding regular public meetings in February 2014.
C-1-4(d)	Hire qualified chief administrator	The SECS governing board hired a qualified chief administrator in March 2014.
C-1-4(e)	Staffing plan in place consistent with school design	RIDE conducted a review of SECS's updated staffing plan and has deemed it consistent with the school's design and the needs of students.
C-1-4(f)	Evidence of interest in enrollment	SECS conducted an enrollment lottery in March 2014. The threshold was met: 54 applicants applied for the 26 available kindergarten seats.
C-1-4(g)	Identify an appropriate building for use	SECS has identified an appropriate building, submitted a 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	Southside Elementary Charter School is not contracting with a comprehensive service or management provider.