

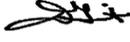


State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
Shepard Building  
255 Westminster Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Enclosure 9b2  
May 12, 2014

Deborah A. Gist  
Commissioner

May 12, 2014

**TO:** Members of the R.I. Board of Education  
**FROM:** Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner   
**RE:** Motion to grant charter - The Hope Academy

---

The charter proposal for The Hope Academy was originally submitted on March 1, 2011 (as the Grace School Mayoral Academy) and 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 February 7 and February 29, 2012.

On October 7, 2013, The Hope Academy 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. The Hope Academy has satisfactorily completed the readiness tasks as fully defined in regulation.

Having completed these readiness criteria, The Hope Academy 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 The Hope Academy and authorize 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: **The Hope Academy**

**Catchment Area:** Providence, North Providence

**Grade Level:** K-8

**Location of School:** Providence

**Charter Type:** Mayoral Academy

**Establishing Persons:**

Mayor Taveras, Providence

Mayor Lombardi, North Providence

## **Mission**

*The Hope Academy is committed to an educational model focusing on the academic and social success of each individual, preparing students to meet the challenges of secondary education, and to become lifelong learners. Working with parents and community partners, The Hope Academy will serve as a local and national replicable model of inclusive education.*

## **Enrollment Plan**

Year 1	2014-15	36 students
Year 2	2015-16	72 students
Year 3	2016-17	108 students
Year 4	2017-18	144 students
Year 5	2018-19	180 students
Eventual Enrollment		324 students

## **Program Overview**

The Hope Academy proposes to be a mayoral academy with a unique partnership with Meeting Street, the Providence-based provider of child development services. Each Hope Academy classroom of 18 students, enrolled via a random process, may also house two students with disabilities that are enrolled in Meeting Street, forming a fully inclusive model of education. As the proposal states, "Hope Academy would be a model of educating children with and without special needs in a charter setting that intentionally includes a population of students whose needs are deemed severe and profound."

The founders state that Hope Academy will provide a highly personalized educational model that promotes differentiated instruction and achieves excellent academic results. In addition, it hopes to generate in students increased acceptance and appreciation of diversity, better communication and social skills, greater development of ethical and moral principles, and increased self-esteem. Hope Academy intends to serve as a replicable model for other schools and districts to provide an inclusive educational program.

The Hope Academy proposal was submitted by education professionals and community leaders with considerable experience in public service and child development, including: Mayor Angel Taveras of Providence; Mayor Charles Lombardi of North Providence; John Kelly, President and CEO of Meeting Street.

- ⇒ The Hope Academy plans to open with 36 students in kindergarten in its first year, and then grow a grade per year until it serves K-4 within its first charter term. The school proposes to eventually grow to a K-8 school of 324 students. (This count is exclusive of Meeting Street students placed here.)
- ⇒ The Hope Academy is committed to an inclusive educational model. To that end, the Hope Academy may permit up to two (2) Meeting Street students with disabilities to attend classes at Hope Academy, along with their Meeting Street teachers of record, at no cost to Hope Academy.
- ⇒ The Hope Academy plans to contract with Meeting Street for instructional and administrative services, including development of curriculum, teacher recruitment, health services, and information technology (IT) services. A Performance Management Agreement has been provided and reviewed by RIDE.



### Public Comment

The 60-day public comment period for Hope Academy began on January 9, 2012 and closed on March 13, 2012. Two public hearings were held: on February 7, 2012 at Fogarty Elementary School in Providence; and on February 29 at Fogarty Elementary School in Providence.

RIDE received comments from 16 individuals during that period. 14 individuals were in support; one undecided; and one opposed. Supporters described the Hope Academy educational philosophy as unique and one committed to an inclusive learning environment that stresses equity, access and high expectations for all students.

### Capacity Interview

The capacity interview for Hope Academy was held on Wednesday, December 9, 2012. Attendees included John Kelly (proposed board member) and Angela Romans (Providence Mayor's Office).

### Variance/ Waiver Requests

The Hope Academy elects to have subsections (i) through (iii) of RIGL § 16-77.4-2 (13) not apply to its teachers, administrators, and employees, as permitted under the Charter Public School Act of Rhode Island.

## 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 The Hope Academy on October 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. The Hope Academy has completed the readiness tasks required for final approval.

### Regulatory Requirements for Final Charter Approval

C-1-4 (a)	Articles of Incorporation	Hope Academy filed incorporation documents with the RI Secretary of State on February 14, 2014.
C-1-4 (b)	Review of financial plan	RIDE has completed its review of The Hope Academy’s five-year budget and financial plan, and deemed the plan satisfactory.
C-1-4(c)	Establish governance structure (i.e. board of trustees or directors)	The Hope Academy governing board has formed and began holding regular public meetings in February 2014.
C-1-4(d)	Hire qualified chief administrator	The EECA governing board has identified a qualified chief administrator and hired the individual in May 2014.
C-1-4(e)	Staffing plan in place consistent with school design	RIDE conducted a review of The Hope Academy’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	The Hope Academy conducted an enrollment lottery on March 1, 2014 and exceeded the regulatory threshold of interested applicants.
C-1-4(g)	Identify an appropriate building for use	The Hope Academy has identified a building, submitted a signed 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 Hope Academy Final Charter has been prepared.
C-1-4(i)	Execute Commissioner-approved contract with comprehensive service or management provider	Meeting Street and Hope Academy have produced a Performance Management Agreement (PMA) that defines the operational partnership between the entities. The PMA was executed in May 2014.