Angélica Infante-Green
Commissioner

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

Enclosure 6b
March 3, 2020

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TO: Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

FROM: Angélica Infante-Green, Commissioner A. Infante

RE: **Approval of the Academy for Career Exploration's Request for Charter Amendment**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education move to approve the Academy for Career Exploration's charter amendment, permitting the school to end its charter term on June 30, 2020.

Enclosed Documents:

The following documents provide further detail regarding the Commissioner's recommendation to the Council:

- Request for Major Charter Amendment, from the Academy for Career Exploration's Board of Directors
- Overview of Commissioner's Charter Renewal Recommendation – December 2019

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PROVIDENCE SCHOOLS
Joe Devine, Chair of Board of Directors
Colleen Larson, Acting Head of School

February 21, 2020

Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green
Rhode Island Department of Education
55 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: **Request for Major Charter Amendment**

Dear Commissioner Infante-Green:

On behalf of the Academy of Career Exploration ("ACE"), I write to request a major amendment to ACE's charter pursuant to Section 2.3.1(A.) of the Rhode Island Council on Secondary and Elementary Education Charter School Regulations. *See* 200-RICR-20-05-2.

On December 17, 2019, the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education voted to renew ACE's charter for one year, with conditions, until June 30, 2021. Since receiving the one year renewal with conditions, ACE's Board of Directors has strived to position itself to meet and address these conditions, including effectuating leadership changes at the board and administrative level, and pursuing the assistance of outside education experts to craft and help implement a viable turnaround plan for the school.

ACE's Board of Directors further evaluated the challenges identified in the charter renewal report relative to the inherent difficulties of the district-charter model. ACE's Board of Directors lastly considered the guidance it received from the Rhode Island Department of Education's Chief for Innovation, Stephen Osborne, who personally attended ACE's February 19, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting to answer questions and provide assurances regarding ACE's students.

After considering the above, ACE's Board of Directors determined that the appropriate course of action is to conclude the charter term and close the school. Accordingly, on February 19, 2020, ACE's Board of Directors voted unanimously to request that the Rhode Island Council of Elementary and Secondary Education approve a major amendment to ACE's charter to conclude its term on June 30, 2020 rather than June 30, 2021. This decision has not been made lightly, and ACE's Board of Directors believes that it is in the best interest of ACE's students and faculty to act now to ensure that each ACE family, student, and faculty member has the best opportunity to consider and settle their respective situation for the 2020-2021 school year and beyond.

Should you have any questions about this request, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Joe Devine
Chair, ACE Board of Directors
joe@Bridge-Talent.com

cc. Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green (via email at angelica.infantegreen@ride.ri.gov)
Stephen Osborne (via email at stephen.osborn@ride.ri.gov)
Matthew R. Plain (via email at mplain@bglaw.com)
C. Alexander Chiulli (via email at achiulli@bglaw.com)

Academy for Career Exploration
Overview of Commissioner's Charter Renewal Recommendation
December 2019

Charter Overview:

Current Charter Overview			
Charter Type	District Charter	2018-19 Grades Served	9-12
School-Year Opened	1997-98	2018-19 Enrollment	209
Current Charter Term	2015/16 – 2019/20	Authorized Enrollment	225
Enrolling Communities	Providence	Location(s)	Providence

School Mission and Model	
School Mission:	The mission of the Academy for Career Exploration (ACE) is "to inspire students to achieve their greatest potential by providing a supportive, customized learning experience that is the foundation for lifelong learning."
School Model:	The Academy for Career Exploration ACE is an in-district charter school, serving students in Providence. The charter opened in 1997, serving grades 9-12, with a total potential enrollment of 225. Throughout its existence, the school has adapted its areas of focus. During the course of this term, the school shifted from CTE programs in Hospitality and Marketing to three (3) information technology programs as of 2016-17 (Computer Networking and Cyber Security, Computer Programming and Web Development and Data Science). The school currently positions itself on its website as "the school for Providence students interested in technology and earning college credits."

Renewal Recommendation Overview:

Summary of Recommendation	
Recommended Action:	**The Commissioner recommends that the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education move to <u>renew</u> the charter of Academy for Career Exploration for one year, with conditions.**
Charter Term:	Current term expires June 30, 2020. New 1-year term is for school year 2020-21
Recommended Conditions:	The time-bound conditions address the charter's specific issues and deficiencies found throughout the renewal process. In addition to meeting the expectations of each renewal condition, the charter may be required to present its progress in meeting the conditions to the Council. The Commissioner, with the advice and consent of the Council, reserves the authority to take action, as outlined in the charter school regulations section 2.5 (200-RICR-20-05-2.2.5), should the charter not meet the expectations of the required renewal conditions. 1. By June 1, 2020, the charter school must address through evidence submission and ongoing progress updates, all deficiencies and violations captured in this memo and renewal report, including, but not limited to: a. Details for serving and supporting Multilingual Learners including, but not limited to: screening and evaluation, certified instructors, appropriate class schedules and interventions, and teacher training. b. Details on how all students can access and earn CTE industry-recognized credentials and/or college credits prior to graduation.

c. Ensuring students are receiving coherent and individualized guidance supports in adherence with the secondary school regulations, 200-RICR-20-10-2.

d. Ensuring all students are receiving, at a minimum, core academic coursework taught by certified instructors.

e. Adoption of a standards-aligned, high quality, curriculum for all grades and core subject areas including a system and process to coordinate, provide training, plan and adjust the curriculum based on students' needs.

2. The charter will undergo an evaluation of student outcomes and programmatic changes during a renewal site visit in the fall/winter of 2020.

Recommendation Key Points:

Academic Performance Summary
The charter's academic performance has been trending downward, with the outcomes of the most recent two years of available data resulting in a Does Not Meet rating on the charter School Performance indictor and a Does Not Meet rating on School Comparison in 2019. In 2018, the school received a School Performance indicator rating of Approaches and a School Comparison indicator rating of Does Not Meet.

- SAT Proficiency Data: In 2019, 23% of students where proficient in ELA and 0% of students were proficient in Math.
- ELA Growth: In 2019, 45% of ACE students showed low growth on state assessments, 32% typical growth, and 22% high growth. In 2018, 63% of ACE students showed low growth on state assessments, 35% typical growth, and 3% high growth.
- Math Growth: In 2019, 45% of ACE students showed low growth, 28% showed typical growth and 28% showed high growth. In 2018, 38% of ACE students showed low growth, 31% showed typical growth and 31% showed high growth.
- Weighted Average Comparison**:** In 2019, the school performed lower than Providence in Math, and in ELA the school's results were not reliably different than Providence. In 2018, the school performed lower than Providence in Math and ELA.
- English Language Proficiency: In 2019, the school did not meet expectations, earning one ELP point (out of 4). Its ELP index score was 36 (out of 110), with 8.8% of Multilingual Learners meeting their English language progress target. In 2018, the school did not have enough students to measure ELP.

Statewide Accountability Results Summary

Year	Rating	Achievement	Growth	ELP
2018-19	1-Star	ELA 1 of 4 pts. Index 30 of 100 Math 1 of 4 pts. Index 13 of 100	ELA 1 of 3 pts. Index 0.77 of 2 Math 1 of 3 pts. Index 0.83 of 2	1 out of 4 pts. Index 36 of 110
2017-18	2- Stars	ELA 1 of 4 pts. Index 28 of 100 Math 1 of 4 pts. Index 15 of 100	ELA 1 of 3 pts. Index 0.40 of 2 Math 2 of 3 pts. Index 0.92 of 2	Not enough students
2016-17	CIS: 56 (Typical)	ELA 16 of 20 pts Math 8 of 20 pts	N/A	N/A
2015-16	CIS: 61 (Typical)	ELA 16 of 20 pts Math 8 of 20 pts	N/A	N/A

Assessment Results Over the Current Term**

Group	2015-16 (PARCC)		2016-17 (PARCC)		2017-18 (SAT)		2018-19 (SAT)	
	ELA	**Math**	**ELA**	**Math**	**ELA**	**Math**	**ELA**	**Math**
All	28.2%	2.0%	16.7%	3.8%	18.0%	8.0%	23.3%	0%
Econ. Disadvantaged	27.6%	2.2%	18.9%	4.8%	20.0%	10.0%	30.0%	0%
Multilingual Learners	*	0.0%	*	0.0%	*	*	*	*
Differently-Abled Students	8.3%	0.0%	*	*	*	*	*	*
Multiracial	*	-	*	*	-	-	*	*
Black/African-American	20.0%	6.3%	9.1%	0%	*	*	*	*
Latino/Hispanic	28.6%	1.2%	20.6%	5.3%	19.1%	7.1%	22.6%	0%
Native American	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	*
Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
White/Caucasian	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

*Assessment proficiency rates are only reported if the N-size is above 10 students.
**Source: Proficiency rates are based on published assessment data each year.

CTE Pathways
In 2019, ACE earned 2 out of 3 points in the post-secondary measure within the Diploma Plus indicator in statewide school accountability. About 60% of the 2018 graduates earned a college credit. No student earned a CTE recognized credential.

- ACE has changed their approach to their CTE program over the last charter term. The school shifted from CTE programs in Hospitality and Marketing to three information technology programs as of 2016-17 (Computer Networking and Cyber Security, Computer Programming and Web Development and Data Science). The school has reached out to RIDE to explore changing these pathways.
    - ACE has also introduced a focus on full-time dual enrollment in a partnership with Roger Williams University, made possible by the state's Advanced Course Network. Students participating do not stay enrolled in their CTE programs in their senior year in pursuit of college credit.
    - ACE, on many occasions, has stated their students are not interested in IT, which they attribute to the blind charter lottery, and as such, are working to determine if alternative strategies for their educational programs might be more appropriate.

Organizational Performance
- The school approached expectations on organizational criterion 2.2, School environment due to lower average daily attendance in 2018-19, 87.7% vs. 90.9% for high schools. This measure is unique to the charter performance framework, as student chronic absenteeism is part of the school's star-rating. In 2018, 27.3% of students were chronically absent, and in 2019, 37.9% of students were chronically absent.
- The school approached expectations on organizational criterion 2.3, equity and access in 2018-19. There was no evidence from document review or the renewal site visit that the school analyzes student attrition data and was using attrition in decision-making.

	Compliance Multilingual Learners • The United States Department of Justice (DOJ) conducted a thorough review of Providence Public Schools' EL programs and services in early 2018. This review found several conditions of the district's EL programming that violate Section 1703(f) of the Equal Educational Opportunities Act. The Settlement Agreement with the DOJ outlines several matters that must be addressed across PPSD schools, including ACE. The charter has acknowledged the Settlement Agreement and has taken action steps both in collaboration with Providence Public Schools and at the school level to address the Settlement Agreement. • The extent of implementing the corrective actions at the school-level remain unclear and lack clear evidence of implementation. The school has stated it is working with PPSD to: implement an accurate student screening; review WIDA scores of all current and incoming Multilingual Learners to ACE to ensure appropriate class schedules; train teachers in conjunction with PPSD; support two classes dedicated for Multilingual Learners; and adapt the schedule to allow for more intervention time for Multilingual Learners. The school states it has one fully certified instructor for approximately 23 students, is paying tuition for two current teachers to take an accelerated ESL certification program, and has purchased a curriculum to support Multilingual students. Educational Program: • During the site visit, students noted a lack of **guidance supports**, a lack of understanding of their graduation requirements, of how to choose courses and CTE pathways, and how to get support for applying to college. • **Irregular core subject programming for students - science**: Due a vacant science position in 2018-19, many students did not receive consistent science instruction and voiced frustration with "losing a whole year of science." The site visit team observed teachers of other core subjects being assigned to teach science. • **Curriculum alignment**: There was no evidence in all grades and in all core content areas that the charter has implemented curricula aligned to statewide standards. There is not a system or structure to coordinate, plan, or adjust to ensure standards are being delivered in the classroom.

Academy for Career Exploration
Overview of Commissioner's Charter Renewal Recommendation
December 2019

Overview of Charter Performance Ratings:

Indicators		SY15-16	SY16-17	SY17-18	SY18-19
Academic	(1A) School Performance	M	M	A	DNM
	(1B) School Comparison	NR	NR	DNM	DNM
Sustainability	(1) Financial	M	M	M	M
	(2) Organizational	M	M	M	A
	(3) Compliance	M	M	A	DNM
Renewal Process Tier		Tier 4. In-Depth Renewal Process			
Updated Tier Designation		Tier 4. (Academics, Organizational, and Compliance)			

Ratings Key			
E	Exceeds Expectations	DNM	Does Not Meet Expectations
M	Meets Expectations	NR	Not Rated
A	Approaches Expectations	NA	Not Applicable