



June 15, 2015

Boston School Committee
2300 Washington Street
Roxbury, MA 02119

Dear Boston School Committee,

On behalf of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School Board of Trustees, I respectfully request your certification of our request to amend our length of school day. By law, Horace Mann charter school amendment requests, except for a change in bylaws, must include a certification that the local school committee has approved the proposed changes. The certified request will then be forwarded to the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for approval. The proposed modification is as follows:

- Beginning in SY15-16, a permanent change to an eight-hour school day.

The current nine-hour school day at DSNCS is staffed by a combination of administrators, teachers, Boston Teacher Residents (BTR) and Dudley Promise Corps (DPC) members. The core of the instructional day occurs from 7:30AM to 3:30PM and we use the final hour of the school day (until 4:30PM) as an opportunity to provide students with targeted academic supports and enrichment opportunities. Our DPC takes the lead in serving students during this final hour, with support and guidance from the administrative team.

Moving forward, we are proposing an eight-hour school day to position all of our staff to work in a more collaborative and coherent manner. Instead of primarily working with students in the final hour of the school day, our DPC members would work alongside teachers and Boston Teacher Residents in the classroom. We are planning to narrow the focus of our DPC members, training and coaching them to support the school's deep emphasis on literacy. To that end, Corps members will facilitate literacy center activities in our early elementary classrooms and will serve as Reading Partners to reinforce independent reading skills in our upper elementary classrooms. They will execute on these roles in close conjunction with the lead classroom teachers—which will allow for improved communication, coaching and programmatic coherence.

It is our assessment that by aligning and integrating staff resources during the core literacy periods, we will drive better results for students. We have found that the ninth hour of the school day is not the best time to implement academic interventions; students are at the end of long and rigorous day that often began on the bus before dawn. By shifting resources within the context of an eight-hour school day, we believe that we are strengthening the quality and efficacy of our academic model.

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School is an academic success, is a viable organization, and is faithful to the terms of its charter. Over the course of the last two years, 73% of students have made a year's worth of growth (or more) in reading. When our lead class entered the school as first graders, just 14% were reading at grade level. By the end of their second grade year, we quadrupled that number to 56%, and an additional 20% of students were close behind. As third graders, this lead class made history as part of the first cohort of students statewide to take PARCC; we are excited to learn about their results in the months to come. In December, we had our Year 3 Charter School Site Visit; the subsequent report found that the school was meeting expectations in all four "Organization Viability" categories: School Leadership, Professional Climate, Contractual Relationships and Governance. Additionally, we were

found to meet expectations in both “Faithfulness to Charter” categories: Mission & Key Design Elements and Access & Equity.

We are proud of our staff’s tenacity in doing whatever it takes to serve each child; our teachers spend endless hours beyond the school day working with families and community partners to make sure every student is well-served. Our daily attendance rate is nearly 96%, suggesting that students feel welcome and respected as individual learners. Over 700 students entered the lottery for 48 seats this spring. In our end-of-the-year family survey in SY13-14, all respondents agreed that the “school is a good place to learn,” that it “prepares my child for the future,” and that their “child is getting a quality education at this school.” We are incredibly proud of all that our school community has accomplished over the past three years and look forward to a brilliant future.

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School Board of Trustees voted to approve this request on March 18, 2015 at a meeting held in compliance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25. At that meeting, the Board of Trustees authorized me to submit this request on their behalf.

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School Board of Trustees requests your approval of this request as soon as possible.

Please contact DSNCS Board designee Simon Hess at 617.650.1286 or shess@bpe.org if you have any questions about this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Hess'.

Simon Hess
DSNCS Board of Trustees Designee

cc. Clint Lawrence, Chair DSNCS Board of Trustees
Ross Wilson, BPS