

MEMORANDUM

TO: School Committee Members

FROM: Dr. Brenda Cassellius, Superintendent

DATE: June 30, 2021

RE: Recommendation Regarding Charter Renewal Application - Dudley Street
Neighborhood Charter School

Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School (“DSNCS”), a Horace Mann charter school serving grades K1-5 and located at 6 Shirley Street in Roxbury, seeks to submit an application to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for renewal of its charter for an additional five (5) year period. DSNCS received its initial charter in 2012, and was approved for a five-year renewal in 2017. If approved, DSNCS’s charter would be renewed for the period 2022-2027. DSNCS contracts with BPE as an educational management organization. As an educational management organization, BPE oversees specific day-to-day school functions, while the school’s board oversees overall strategy and guidance and progress towards academic goals.

Pursuant to G.L. 71, § 89(dd), “a charter for a Horace Mann charter school shall not be renewed by the board without a majority vote of the school committee and local collective bargaining unit in the district where said charter school is located”

DESE bases its decision to renew a charter “upon the presentation of affirmative evidence regarding the faithfulness of the school to the terms of its charter, including the extent to which the school has followed its recruitment and retention plan and has disseminated best practices in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, s. 89(dd); the success of the school’s academic program; and the viability of the school as an organization.” 603 CMR 1.11.

Pursuant to G.L. 71, § 89(dd), “a charter for a Horace Mann charter school shall not be renewed by the board without a majority vote of the school committee and local collective bargaining unit in the district where said charter school is located”

DSNCS’s application is enclosed. After conducting a review of DSNCSs application, I recommend approval of its charter renewal application to DESE for the period of 2022-2027.



Data Summary

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, state accountability results, including MCAS, from 2020 are not available. In the most recent accountability data available from 2019, DSNCS was in the 8th percentile of schools statewide, a decrease from the 9th percentile in the prior year. If DSNCS was an in-district school (non-charter), DSNCS would have been considered a transformation school. The school had mixed results for different student groups. In 2017-2018, DSNCS's African-American students' performance was in the 52nd percentile relative to the performance of the same subgroup in schools administering similar assessments, and they were deemed meeting criterion referenced improvement targets (83% of points). The school's Latina/o subgroup performed at the 46th percentile and also met improvement targets (80% of points). In 2018-2019, African-American students' performance increased to the 57th percentile relative to performance of the same subgroup, but the school's Latina/o subgroup's performance decreased to the 33rd percentile.

In the absence of state accountability results and MCAS, DSNCS has provided information on their chosen formative assessments. While in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 the school exceeded its target of 75% of students in grades K2-5 demonstrating one year of growth on the STEP/F&P assessment of literacy (76% and 79%, respectively), in 2019-2020 only 68% of students with available data met the growth benchmark. The school failed to meet its target of 70% of students in grades K2-5 demonstrating at least 70% mastery on math end-of-unit assessments in years 2017-2018, 2018-2019, or 2019-2020, with only 59% (2017-2018), 54% (2018-2019), and 63% (2019-2020) of students meeting that benchmark.

In light of this data, DSNCS should continue to develop ways to improve student achievement and to eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps.

DSNCS has also made gains. DSNCS has substantially dropped its rates of in-school and out-of-school suspensions. The rate of in-school suspensions dropped from 4.7% in 2016 to 1.8% in 2019, below the state average of 1.9%. Out-of-school suspensions dropped from 5.4% in 2016 to 4.4% in 2017 and 0.7% in 2019, well below the state average of 3.0%.

Finally, DSNCS's Teaching Academy model is a strong point, where Boston Teacher Residency residents and Dudley Promise Corps members work directly with students as they prepare for careers as teachers. During its second charter term, DSNCS served as the Teaching Academy host site for the preparation of 40 new BPS teachers. Of the pre-service teachers prepared at the school, all but one went on to teach at BPS the next year. DSNCS should continue to grow this successful program.

Based on the above analysis, I recommend approval of DSNCS's charter renewal for 2022-2027.





Office of the Superintendent

Dr. Brenda Cassellius, Superintendent
Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street, 5th Floor
Roxbury, Massachusetts 02119

617-635-9050

superintendent@bostonpublicschools.org
www.bostonpublicschools.org

BPE Executive Director Jesse Solomon, DSNCS Principal Elijah Heckstall, and Board Chair Hakim Harris will be available to answer questions regarding the application.

