



35 Westville Street  
Boston, MA 02124  
upacademydorchester.org

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August 31, 2016

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148

Dear Board of Elementary and Secondary Education:

On behalf of the UP Academy Charter School of Dorchester Board of Trustees, I respectfully request your approval of an amendment to change our charter to increase our maximum enrollment from our current cap of 750 students to 820 students. These changes to our charter will be effective upon the approval of the Boston Teacher's Union, Boston School Committee, and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The UP Academy Charter School of Dorchester Board of Trustees wishes to make this change to continue to provide a high quality option for new and returning students as it completes its expansion to a K1-8. The completion of its expansion to a K1-8, combined with lower attrition rates than its peer schools have led to an overall spike in enrollment at UP Academy Dorchester. Although low attrition rates are positive, they will lead UP Academy Dorchester to exceed its original cap of 750 – a cap set before UP Academy Dorchester knew how many former John Marshall Elementary (as the school was previously known prior to restart) students would return. Raising the cap to 820 will allow UP Academy Dorchester to provide all enrolled students with a Level One option, while continuing to respond to families' demand for seats, as evidenced by the school's long waitlist numbers (over 1200 students) and furthering the school's mission by ensuring "that our students acquire the knowledge, skills, and strength of character necessary to succeed on the path to college and to achieve their full potential."

The UP Academy Charter School of Dorchester Board of Trustees voted to approve this request on January 27, 2016 at a meeting held in compliance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25. Subsequently, it will be presented to the Boston Teachers Union and Boston School Committee for approval.

To date, UP Academy Dorchester has demonstrated that it is an academic success, is a viable organization, and is faithful to the terms of its charter. During the 2013-2014 academic year, students from UP Academy Dorchester demonstrated incredible academic progress, ranking #1 among all elementary, middle, and high schools in the state for academic growth in math, raising math proficiency rates from 13% to 60%, and improving English Language Arts (ELA) proficiency rates from 14% to 40%. In its second year of operation, students again ranked in the top twenty percent for growth on the spring MCAS among all public elementary schools in the state in both math and ELA. UP Academy Dorchester was officially named a Level One school in the fall of 2015.

In addition to academic success, UP Academy Dorchester has experienced lower rates of attrition than the Marshall, moving from a rate of 17% summer attrition and 20% school year attrition in 2012 to only 4.8% summer attrition and 11.1% school year attrition in 2015. Similarly, UP Academy Dor-



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chester's 2015 school year attrition rate of 11.1% is lower than the 2015 average for Boston Public Schools' average school year attrition rate of 13.5%. This trend of lower attrition rates, while positive, has meant that overall enrollment per grade has remained higher than anticipated upon the approval of UP Academy Dorchester's original charter, thereby driving the need to amend the enrollment cap listed in our charter.

The UP Academy Charter School of Dorchester Board of Trustees requests that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve this request at an upcoming board meeting after the Boston School Committee and Boston Teachers Union have approved the amendment.

Please feel free to contact Christina Perry, Chief of Staff at UP Education Network, at [cperry@upe-ducationnetwork.org](mailto:cperry@upe-ducationnetwork.org) or (678) 983-0706 if you have any questions about this request.

Sincerely,

Robert McConnaughey  
Chair, UP Academy Charter School of Dorchester Board of Trustees

Cc: Tommy Chang, Superintendent, Boston Public Schools  
Lana Ewing, Principal, UP Academy Dorchester  
Scott Given, CEO, UP Education Network