

For immediate release

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Commissioner Recommends Three New Charter Schools
Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to vote February 27

MALDEN – Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Mitchell D. Chester today announced that he is recommending that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education grant charters to groups seeking to open new regional charter schools in Plymouth, Sturbridge and Westfield.

At the Board's February 27, 2017 meeting, Commissioner Chester will recommend approval of:

- Hampden Charter School of Science – West, which would open in 2018, initially serve 252 students in grades 6-9 from Agawam, Holyoke, Westfield and West Springfield, and grow to serve 588 students in grades 6-12. It would be located in Westfield. Like the existing Hampden Charter School of Science in Chicopee, the new school would have a math and science focus.
- Map Academy Charter School, which would open in 2018, initially serve 130 students in grades 9-12 from Carver, Plymouth, and Wareham, and grow to 300 students. It would be located in Plymouth. It would serve students who have dropped out of school or who are at risk of dropping out and would offer a flexible schedule.
- Old Sturbridge Academy Charter Public School, which open this fall; initially serve 160 students in kindergarten through grade 3 from Sturbridge, Brimfield, Brookfield, Holland, Monson, North Brookfield, Palmer, Southbridge, Spencer-East Brookfield, Wales and Webster; and grow to serve 360 students in K-8. It would be located in Sturbridge. It would offer project-based learning, an emphasis on character development, and daily access to museum resources at Old Sturbridge Village.

"We have reviewed the charter applications carefully. I believe these recommended proposals would be strong additions to the range of school options available to families," Commissioner Chester said. "I look forward to discussing these proposals with the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education later this month."

As part of the 2016-17 charter school application cycle, ESE received [five prospectuses to open new charter schools and one letter of intent](#) from an existing school to open an additional school. Commissioner Chester invited the founders of [four of those groups](#) to submit final applications.

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will decide whether to grant charters to any or all of the recommended schools at its February 27, 2017 meeting in Malden.

In addition to considering whether to award new charters every year, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education also considers whether to grant [expansion requests](#). In November, the Board approved a request from Foxborough Regional Charter School to increase its maximum enrollment by 400 seats. In January, the Board approved three requests to increase maximum enrollment: Boston Collegiate Charter School (an increase of 35 seats), Boston Preparatory Charter Public School (an increase of 300 seats), and Sturgis Charter Public School in Hyannis (an increase of 50 seats).

This month, Commissioner Chester is recommending that the Board approve four schools' requests to increase enrollment: Alma del Mar Charter School in New Bedford (an increase of 90 seats), Community Charter School of Cambridge (an increase of 60 seats) and Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School (an increase of 452 seats). Commissioner Chester is also recommending a temporary increase in enrollment of 70 seats for UP Academy Charter School of Dorchester, a Horace Mann school in Boston. The school and the Boston School Committee requested the seats in order to address unanticipated higher enrollment.

More information on the [final applications](#) and [proposed expansions](#) is available online. For more information on charter schools in general, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter>.

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