

IX.F.

Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

To Be Proposed:

June 1, 2022

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-66ss of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the March 11, 2021, charter amendment proposal of Odyssey Community School to add Grade PK for fiscal year 2022-23 and increase maximum approved enrollment capacity to 373, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____, this first day of June, Two Thousand Twenty-Two.

Signed: _____

Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Secretary
State Board of Education

**Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford**

To: State Board of Education

From: Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of Education

Date: June 1, 2022

Subject: Approval of Material Change to Odyssey Community School, Manchester

Executive Summary

Introduction

Odyssey Community School (Odyssey) opened in the fall of 1997. Odyssey is a state charter school serving a maximum enrollment of 328 students with an approved charter to serve Grades K-8. The school was granted a five-year renewal by the State Board of Education (SBE) on March 4, 2020. Five years is the maximum number allowed by state law, and is reserved for schools found to have a successful model resulting in strong student outcomes, a positive school climate, financial and organizational health, promotion of equity by effectively attracting, enrolling, and retaining students and is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Odyssey's charter amendment proposal (Attachment A), asks the SBE to consider amending its charter to:

- expand grade configuration to add PK (36 seats), in 2022-2023; and
- increase current enrollment by 45 seats to 373 (9 of which will be distributed across Grades K-8).

The Connecticut General Assembly passed a 2022-23 state budget that financially supports a seat increase for Odyssey Community School.

As Odyssey is in Manchester and within the Sheff Region, Manchester resident-students may apply and attend any of the Sheff region magnet schools. However, there is a shortage of PK seats. For the 2020-21 school year, the Sheff Office received 1,271 applications from Manchester families seeking PK seats. Of those, 799 did not get offers.

Background/Process

Connecticut law requires that a charter school governing council that “plans to make a material change in the school’s operations” submit such request to amend its charter to the SBE. The law defines “material change” to be “a change that fundamentally alters a charter school’s mission, organizational structure or educational program,” including, among other things, changing a school’s grade configuration; opening an additional school building; or increasing or decreasing the total student enrollment capacity by 20 percent or more (Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 10-66ss(a)).

In accordance with C.G.S. Section 10-66ss, the SBE must review the charter school’s amendment proposal, solicit comments from the board of education in which the charter school is located, and vote on the proposal. On May 19, 2022, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) solicited written comments from the board of education in which the charter school is located.

Recommendation with Conditions

Based on Odyssey Community School’s demonstrated record of success, the financial support afforded in the 2022-23 state budget and the shortage of PK seats in Manchester, the CSDE recommends approving Odyssey’s charter amendment request to add Grade PK, in 2022-2023, and increase maximum approved enrollment capacity to 373.

Prepared by: Robert E. Kelly, Charter School Program Manager
Turnaround Office

Reviewed by: Lisa Lamenzo, Division Director
Turnaround Office

Approved by: Desi D. Nesmith, Deputy Commissioner



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

March 5, 2021



Principals, Directors and Administrators,

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) seeks to confirm enrollment requests from the charter schools for the 2022-23 fiscal year. Below is the 2022-23 enrollment request you provided the State Department of Education in the 2019-20 Annual Report. We wish to confirm this number and identify those schools seeking to increase student enrollment.

Enrollment increases will be reviewed in accordance with the process outlined in the Enrollment Request for Charter Schools, letter dated February 22, 2021.

Please submit your response by April 1, 2021. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 860-713-6574.

Charter School Enrollment

Charter School Name: Odyssey Community School

1. **Column One**, includes the school's current approved enrollment. **Column Two**, includes the enrollment request made in the school's 2019-20 Annual Report for FY 2022-23. **Column Three**, confirm the FY 2022-23 enrollment request.

| Column One | Column Two | Column Three |
|---|---|---|
| Current Approved 2020-21 Enrollment | Annual Report FY 2022-23 Enrollment Request | Confirm FY 2022-23 Enrollment Request |
| 328 | 357 | 373 |

2. Checked below best describes the request above. This change is needed:

- ☐ To meet State Board of Education approved charter.
☐ To fulfill State Board of Education approved new grade growth.
☒ To increase seats across current grade configuration.
☒ Requesting SBE approval for material change adding new grades. (PreK)
☐ No change from current approved enrollment needed.

3. If applicable, using an additional page, describe how the school will physically satisfy the space requirements needed to accommodate the additional students proposed. Describe how the school will meet the educational needs of the additional students.

Odyssey Space Requirements

Odyssey School has recently re-negotiated a long-term extension to our current lease. This lease will carry us through at least the next decade with a marginal increase at 5 years out and another small increase again at 10 years out. This has provided us with the opportunity to consider adding additional space (19000 square feet) in our building at a further reduced rate (cost per square foot) that would allow us the following:

- Additional middle school space for world language programming,
- Additional elementary space for reconfiguring existing space to address our current need for additional office space and small group instructional space,
- Two preschool classrooms for 36 additional students.