

IX.G.

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 Park City Prep Charter School to add Grade 4 for fiscal year 2022-23 and increase maximum approved enrollment capacity to 435, 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 Park City Prep Charter School, Bridgeport

Executive Summary

Introduction

Park City Prep Charter School (Park City) opened in the fall of 2006. Park City is a state charter school serving a maximum enrollment of 360 students with an approved charter to serve Grades 5-8. The school was granted a three-year renewal by the State Board of Education (SBE) on May 1, 2019. Due to implications of the pandemic, the SBE approved a one-year extension on July 14, 2020, the charter will end June 30, 2023. Park City Prep Charter School has been recognized as a School of Distinction per the 2018-19 Connecticut Next Generation Accountability for high growth for high needs students in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

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

- expand grade configuration to add Grade 4, in 2022-2023; and
- increase current enrollment by 75 seats to 435.

The Connecticut General Assembly passed a 2022-23 state budget that financially supports a seat increase for Park City Prep Charter School.

When one considers the landscape of school choice options in Bridgeport, there is one interdistrict magnet school, Fairchild Wheeler, which serves grades 9-12. For grades 4 through 8, Bridgeport families have access to a limited number of seats in surrounding communities through the Open Choice Program.

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. Mr. Michael Testani, Superintendent of Bridgeport Public Schools, responded to the request on behalf of the Bridgeport Board of Education indicating their understanding of the scope of the material change (see Attachment B).

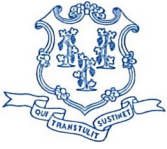
Recommendation with Conditions

Based on Park City Prep Charter School’s demonstrated record of success, the financial support afforded in the 2022-23 state budget and the limited public school choice options in the Bridgeport area, the CSDE recommends approving Park City’s charter amendment request to add Grade 4, in 2022-2023 and increase maximum approved enrollment capacity to 435.

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: Park City Prep Charter 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
360	360	435

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

☐ **Requesting SBE approval for material change adding a new grade – Grade 4.**

OVER

3. Describe how the school will physically satisfy the space requirements needed to accommodate the additional students proposed.

On the grounds of the existing school, there is a smaller building, which was previously occupied by a tenant, who moved, and the space is now vacant and available for us to rent from our current landlord, who desires Park City Prep to be the tenant over any others, who may be interested, and is open to waiting for the 2022-2023 school year for us to take that space.

The available space is large enough to accommodate up to three classrooms of 25 students each. The landlord would do the entire “fit-out” at no cost to us.

4. Describe how the school will meet the educational needs of the additional students.

If granted the increased enrollment, we would hire three additional teachers for the 75 new, grade 4 students. With two full-time school counselors, two full-time deans of students and two special education teachers, we already have enough support staff to meet the needs of the additional students.

5. Rationale for Request

We believe that the more years that we have to educate our students, and the earlier in age they come to us, the greater the chances are that the students can make even greater progress.

We began with 176 students in grades 6-8 in 2006. When we were approved to add a 5th grade the year after we moved into our current location, our enrollment had increased to 360 students. Having students for four years versus just three has been of enormous benefit to us as our students’ performance has shown significant improvement, most notably in the 2018-2019 school year, the last time SBAC was administered.

At that time, the CSDE recognized Park City Prep Charter school as a “School of Distinction” for the outstanding growth of its “High Needs Students” in BOTH reading and math. Further evidence of the excellent work we are doing is illustrated by the fact that our students far outperformed their counterparts in the Bridgeport Public Schools across the board, as well as exceeded the performance of most of their counterparts in the other charter schools in Bridgeport.

Our record of academic achievement, excellent attendance (even throughout the remote and hybrid learning model since the pandemic – 94%) and continuously lower rates of suspension and chronic absenteeism are further indications that enabling us to add another grade would be of great benefit to that many more students, many of whom are languishing in schools that have not been sufficiently able to meet their needs.

We are confident that, by having five years to groom our students before they leave after grade 8, our graduates would be even better prepared than they are now, to excel in selective and competitive high schools and truly be that much more “college ready” when they graduate from high school.

P.O. Box 2219 • Hartford, Connecticut 06145
An Equal Opportunity Employer

Lamenzo, Lisa

From: Testani, Michael <mtestani@bridgeportedu.net>
Sent: Friday, May 20, 2022 3:03 PM
To: Lamenzo, Lisa
Subject: Park City Prep

EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon,

I am writing in regards to the most recent letter I received stating that Park City Prep Charter School in Bridgeport will be adding grade 4 next year. Since they addition to the school does not include another location, I have no objection to their request to the CSDE.

Sincerely,

Mike

Michael J. Testani
Superintendent of Schools
Bridgeport Public Schools
Mtestani@Bridgeportedu.net
203-275-1001



CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This email transmission (and/or the attachments accompanying it) may contain legally privileged and confidential information, and is intended only for the use of