



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



### **State Charter School Information**

A state charter school is a new public, nonsectarian school approved and funded by the state. A state charter school is established under a charter granted, pursuant to state law and is organized as a nonprofit entity, acts as a public agency, and operates independently of any local or regional board of education in accordance with the terms of its charter and state law. The local or regional board of education is not required to fund a state charter school or provide the school with a facility. The law requires the board to provide transportation and pay for the special education services of its resident students that attend the charter school as it would for any resident public school student. Today, there are 21 charters in Connecticut, 20 state, and 1 local (Elm City Montessori, New Haven), providing a high-quality public school education to approximately 11,056 students.

### **New State Charter Request for Proposal (RFP) Background**

Pursuant to Sec. 10-66bb, subsection (c) On and after July 1, 2015, the State Board of Education shall review, annually, all applications and grant initial certificates of approval for charters, in accordance with subsections (e) and (f) of this section, for a local or state charter school located in a town that has one or more schools that have been designated as a commissioner's network school, pursuant to section 10-223h, at the time of such application, or a town that has been designated as a low achieving school district, pursuant to section 10-223e, at the time of such application.

On March 15, 2022, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) requested proposals for new state charter schools, the CSDE received seven applications by the December 1, 2022, deadline. The review process for each state application includes the following components:

- 1. Review for Completeness:** Each applicant must produce a complete charter school application that addresses all the elements required by law in order to be reviewed by the CSDE. Any incomplete application will be returned to the applicant and eliminated from the review process.
- 2. Application:** Complete applications will be evaluated by a team of the CSDE representatives with education expertise and knowledge of charter school operations and finance. Each application will be scored using the Application Review Standards against the criteria detailed in the Application Rubric.
- 3. Public Hearing:** There will be an opportunity for the public to comment on the merits of the application. The hearing will be convened by members of the State Board of Education (SBE) and take place in the town in which the proposed charter school would be located. In addition, the CSDE will solicit and review comments on the application from the appropriate local or regional board of education, and from the local or regional boards of education for school districts that are contiguous to the district in which the proposed charter school would be located.

4. **Commissioner Recommendation:** In deciding whether to recommend that an application be considered by the SBE for approval, the Commissioner will consider any and all information, including, but not limited to, the CSDE review team's recommendation based on the summary rating of the application and any information learned or presented at a public hearing. The SBE makes the final decision on charter approval.

**CSBE Vote:** If the SBE grants an initial certificate of approval for a charter, the SBE must submit the following materials to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education and appropriations and the budgets of state agencies: (1) a copy of the initial certificate of approval; and (2) a summary of comments made at the public hearing held as part of the charter application process.

**General Assembly Funding:** Pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-66bb(a)(2), if the General Assembly appropriates sufficient funding for the school, an initial certificate of approval for a charter school shall be effective and deemed a charter as of July first of the first fiscal year for which such funds are appropriated. In the absence of such funding, the entity seeking to open as a charter school does not, as a matter of law, have a charter, nor can it represent itself or act as a school. It is essentially a concept, not a school.