

V.B.

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO BE PROPOSED:

October 3, 2018

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, accepts the Commissioner's advisory and grants initial certificate of approval for a state charter to Danbury Prospect Charter School, subject to the conditions noted in the Commissioner's October 3, 2018, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved, by a vote of _____ this third day of October, Two Thousand Eighteen.

Signed: _____
Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary
State Board of Education

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO: State Board of Education
FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education
DATE: October 3, 2018
SUBJECT: Approval of Danbury Prospect Charter School

Executive Summary

Introduction

Subsection (f) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S) requires that an application for the establishment of a state charter school be submitted to the State Board of Education (SBE) for approval, and filed with the local or regional board of education in the school district in which the charter school is to be located. The SBE may approve an application and grant the *initial certificate of approval* for the charter for the state charter school by a majority vote of the membership. The SBE may condition granting the *initial certificate of approval* for the charter based on the applicant meeting certain conditions determined by the Commissioner of Education to be necessary, and may authorize the Commissioner to release the *initial certificate of approval* for the charter when the Commissioner determines such conditions are met. Under Section 10-66bb(a) of the C.G.S. (as amended in 2015), if the SBE grants an initial certificate of approval for a charter, the SBE must submit a copy of its approval documents and a summary of comments made at the local public hearing concerning the proposed new charter school to the Education and Appropriation committees of the Legislature. Section 10-66bb(a) further provides that the Legislature may appropriate funds to CSDE to provide operating grants to charter schools, and, if such funds are appropriated, an initial certificate of approval for a charter shall be deemed effective as of July 1st of the first fiscal year for which such funds are appropriated. After an initial certificate of approval for a charter for a state charter school is deemed a charter pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-66bb(a)(2), such charter may be valid for a period of time of up to five years. The SBE may allow the applicant to delay its opening for a period of time of up to one year, in order for the applicant to fully prepare to provide appropriate instructional services.

Background

On December 27, 2016, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) released a Request for Proposals for new state and local charter schools. Pursuant to Section 10-66bb(c) of the C.G.S., which requires the SBE annually to consider applications for proposed charter schools located in towns that have one or more Commissioner's Network Schools or in a town designated as a low-achieving school district. The application for Danbury Prospect Charter School (Danbury Prospect), a proposed state charter school to be located in Danbury, CT, was received on August 15, 2017.

Danbury Prospect's proposed mission is Grades 6-12 college preparatory school, modeled after Brooklyn Prospect Charter School which operates four charter schools in New York. Danbury Prospect Charter School will provide an International Baccalaureate (IB) program aligned to the Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and IB standards. The applicant states the curriculum has been developed and refined over eight years of implementation at the modeled schools. It purports to challenge and engage a wide range of learners, from students who struggle academically to students who achieve at high levels, and bring all students to career and college readiness. The school indicates this will be done through the offering of a multitude of specifically tailored learning experiences, such as project-based activities, small group instruction, and field experiences, which provide multiple access points for student learning. Additionally, the school proposes utilizing technology to both develop student interest and understanding and track student progress.

Brooklyn Prospect Charter School (Brooklyn Prospect) has served as the primary support team during the planning and design process for Danbury Prospect. Brooklyn Prospect is a charter school management organization that has opened and operates four charter schools in Brooklyn, New York: Brooklyn Prospect Windsor Terrace Middle School in 2009, Brooklyn Prospect High School in 2012, Brooklyn Prospect Downtown Elementary School in 2013, and Brooklyn Prospect Clinton Hill Middle School in 2016. Danbury Prospect Charter School plans to contract with Brooklyn Prospect Charter School as the charter management organization (CMO) if the charter is approved.

Danbury Prospect proposes to open in July 2019, with the following growth plan:

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
Year 1	110							110
Year 2	110	110						220
Year 3	110	110	110					330
Year 4	110	110	110	110				440
Year 5	110	110	110	110	110			550

Section 10-66bb(c) of the C.G.S. directs the SBE to give preference to certain applications. Danbury Prospect seeks to be considered for the following statutory preference:

1. Opening the charter school in a Priority School District.

Danbury Prospect Charter School Application Review Process

Application Review: A team composed of CSDE managers appointed by the Commissioner of Education with expertise in curriculum, instruction, academics, finance, etc. reviewed the application. The application was evaluated based on the standards and review criteria detailed in the *Application Package for the Development of State and Local Charter Schools*. In the 19 sections of the application that were scored, Danbury Prospect scored 39.9 points out of a total possible 57 points (see Attachment A).

Public Hearing: Dr. Estela López, Vice Chairperson of the State Board of Education, and CSDE staff presided over a public hearing on Danbury Prospect's application on March 15, 2018. The hearing was held in the City of Danbury, the district in which the proposed school is to be located. Over 170 people attended the public hearing and 37 individuals including parents, students, educators, nonprofit leaders, elected officials and community representatives, spoke at the hearing: 27 spoke in support of the application and 10 spoke in opposition of the application.

Invitation for Written Comments: The CSDE solicited comments from the Danbury Board of Education and from the local and regional boards of education in towns contiguous to Danbury, which include Bethel, Brookfield, Easton, New Fairfield and Ridgefield. A letter of comment was received from, Dr. Salvatore V. Pascarella, Superintendent of Danbury Public Schools (Attachment B). Additional letters of comment were submitted by Mayor Mark D. Boughton, City of Danbury (Attachment C), Dr. Christine Carver, Superintendent of Bethel Public Schools (Attachment D), Dr. Thomas H. McMorrان, Superintendent of Easton, Redding, Region 9 Schools (Attachment E) Dr. Alicia M. Roy, Superintendent of New Fairfield Public Schools (Attachment F), State Representative Michael S. Ferguson (Attachment G), State Senator Michael A. McLachlan (Attachment H).

Recommendation with Conditions

I recommend the SBE consider the application and grant *initial certificate of approval* for a state charter to Danbury Prospect Charter School, subject to the following conditions:

1. If the initial certificate of approval for the state charter is deemed a charter pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-66bb(a) (2) based on legislative appropriation of funds, such charter may be valid for a period of three years.
2. Receipt of all completed documentation relating to facility requirements including safety, liability and insurance certifications prior to school opening.
3. Receipt of all required and completed documentation relating to incorporation status and identification of governing board members prior to school opening.
4. SBE approval of a contract for whole school management services between Danbury Prospect Charter School and Brooklyn Prospect Charter School the charter school management organization prior to school opening Pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-66tt.

5. SBE approval of a statutorily required contract between the Governing Council of Danbury Prospect Charter School and the State Board of Education that sets forth the roles, powers, responsibilities and performance expectations of each party to the contract prior to school opening.

Prepared by: _____
Robert Kelly
Charter School Program Manager
Turnaround Office

Approved by: _____
Desi D. Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer
Turnaround Office

APPENDIX G: APPLICATION RUBRIC

Proposed Charter School Name: _____ **Danbury Prospect Charter School** _____

Date: 02 / 09 /2018

Directions: Using the rubric below, please apply the Review Standards to score each section of the RFP on a scale of “0 – Does Not Meet” to “3 – Exceeds”; evaluate each of the sub-indicators to arrive at an overall “Total Score” for each section. The total score for each section should reflect an average of the scores for each of the sub-indicators outlined for that section. Enter the total score for each section on the final “Evaluation Summary” page. Lastly, recommend whether to award the applicant preference(s).

Review Standards:	
0	Does Not Meet: The response lacks meaningful detail, demonstrates a lack of preparation, or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the applicant’s understanding of the issues in concept and/or ability to meet the requirement in practice.
1	Partially Meets: The response lacks critical details in certain areas. The response requires additional information in order to be considered reasonably comprehensive and demonstrate a clear vision of how the school will operate.
2	Meets: The response indicates solid preparation and a grasp of the key issues, as demonstrated by a reasonable and comprehensive response. It addresses the review criteria with information showing preparation and a clear, realistic picture of how the school will operate. The response demonstrates the ability of the applicant to execute the vision described in the response.
3	Exceeds: The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. The response indicates thorough preparation, expertise, and a clear and compelling picture of how the school will operate. The response demonstrates the readiness of the applicant to successfully execute the vision described in the response.

I. School Vision and Design						
1. Mission and Vision Statements	Total Score:	2.25	0	1	2	3
Speak to the core purpose and key values of the school.					✓	
Communicate high academic standards for student success.					✓	
Illustrate a compelling vision for the school community.						✓
Describe the ways in which the school will positively impact stakeholders in the school and community.					✓	
Justifications:						
<p>The mission and vision statements articulate a compelling purpose including benefits of the IB program and high student expectations. The core purpose of the school centers around the IB program, a diverse population, and excellent teachers. Although there is reference to the commitment to diversity, the application provides insufficient detail regarding students served.</p> <p>High academic standards are supported with clearly defined academic performance indicators, and key values centered around scholarly habits and readiness mindsets.</p>						

2. Educational Philosophy	Total Score:	3.00	0	1	2	3
Describes the founding group's core beliefs and values.						✓
Demonstrates the willingness to embrace and serve the diverse needs of individual students.						✓
Provides a compelling argument that the approach is likely to improve students' academic performance.						✓
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>Application provides detailed response to the founding group's core beliefs and values of a diverse student body that will be college ready, engage in a rigorous and globally focused program, and have excellent teachers that will use data to inform instruction.</p> <p>Evidence of willingness to embrace the needs of diverse learners through the development of a demanding and inclusive school culture, that utilizes data for continuous improvement to inform social-emotional and academic interventions, and a commitment to a Whole-Child Approach to Learning.</p> <p>Students' academic performance will be encouraged through addressing diverse learning styles and leveraging social-emotional learning and research tested learning practices.</p>						
3. Curriculum	Total Score:	1.43	0	1	2	3
Explains the process to identify or develop curriculum to be used by the school and provides a rationale for the process.					✓	
Provides evidence of alignment to the Connecticut Core Standards for ELA and mathematics and NGSS for Science. Provides evidence demonstrating that the curriculum is likely to improve students' academic performance.				✓		
Provides evidence demonstrating that the curriculum is likely to improve students' academic performance.					✓	
Demonstrates accessibility and appropriateness for students at all levels, including ELs, students with disabilities, etc.				✓		
Provides evidence of alignment to the Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for Science and Connecticut State Frameworks.					✓	
Describes a clear plan for the ongoing development, improvement, and refinement of the curriculum.				✓		
Describes a process for monitoring and assessing the implementation and effectiveness of the curriculum.				✓		
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>There is a concerning focus on alignment to Smarter Balanced Assessments SBAC. Over focus on assessment in monitoring process.</p>						

4. Instruction	Total Score:	2.25	0	1	2	3
Describes the instructional methods or techniques that will be used to facilitate high-quality teaching and learning.					✓	
Demonstrates how instructional methods support high standards and are accessible and appropriate for all students.					✓	
Explains how the school will create a data-driven culture to meet a wide range of student needs.					✓	
Describes how the school will determine and provide for the professional development needs of the staff.						✓
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>An array of instructional approaches are outlined ranging from whole group instruction and elements that will be incorporated in the planning and execution, to co-teaching and small group instruction and the frameworks that this instruction will follow. Student data will be collected from growth assessments to formative assessments in order to inform instruction on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis.</p> <p>Instructional methods/techniques center on opportunities for seminar-based discussion and exposure to higher level content, as well as opportunities to observe modeling from peers with supports. Small group instruction provides an instructional vehicle for differentiation of content, activities and teaching styles, and assessment.</p> <p>A data-driven environment is established through a clear and realistic picture of how the school will utilize data to inform instruction.</p> <p>An extensive plan for professional development is provided through 15 summer days, 39 early release days and outside programming supported by external partners. Professional development centers around opportunities for coaching and are protocol-focused.</p>						
5. Student Assessment	Total Score:	1.63	0	1	2	3
Presents a comprehensive assessment system, including formative, benchmark, and summative assessments.				✓		
Indicates how the assessment system ensures the participation of all students on both the state mandated testing and other alternative assessments.				✓		
Explains how assessments will be used to determine, monitor, and report student, cohort, and school progress over time.					✓	
Provides a coherent assessment calendar, allowing opportunities for remediation.					✓	
Shows clear alignment between the curriculum, instructional philosophy, and assessments.				✓		
Demonstrates how assessment data will be used to improve curriculum and instruction.					✓	
Shows a clear process to use assessment data to apply appropriate and timely student interventions and support.					✓	
Presents a clear plan to share learning practices and experiences with the local or regional board of education of the town in which the proposed school is located.					✓	
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>Good description of assessments, but there is too much STOP and TEST Testing. Several test are not aligned to standards.</p> <p>Incorrect reference to Multilingual Academic Support (MAS), discontinued and recently arrived English learners (EL). Weak on non-cognitive factors. No mention of benchmark assessments for improving instruction. No clear instructional philosophy.</p>						

II. Strength of Organizational Effort

1. Experience and Expertise of Founders	Total Score:	3.00	0	1	2	3
Demonstrates clear expertise and relevant experiences and/or qualifications of the founders.						✓
Specifies the role of the founding group in the development and launch of the proposed school.						✓
Identifies any organizations, individuals, or consultants that are partners in designing and launching the proposed school, and provide evidence of the partner's ability to operate a high-quality school.						✓
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>The founders have a wide range of experiences in opening and operating successful school models. There is a balance of community and educational founders with a strong experience base. The partnering organizations have evidence of supporting the successful operation of a high-quality school.</p>						
2. School Governance and Management	Total Score:	2.38	0	1	2	3
Provides a viable governance structure and organizational chart showing proper oversight of various functions of the school.					✓	
Presents a clear picture of the officers and members, terms, election/appointment processes, and committees.					✓	
Specifies the criteria for selecting officers and members of the governing council.					✓	
Describes how the governing council will exercise its responsibility to oversee the operation of the school including, but not limited to, educational programs, governance and fiscal management, personnel, facility maintenance, and community outreach. Indicates how the governing council will hold the school accountable to stakeholders.						✓
Provides resumes of initial council membership, showing a wide range of expertise and experiences.						✓
Defines the roles, responsibilities, and interaction between council membership, committees, and school administration.						✓
Presents the process by which the governing council will hire and evaluate the school administrator.					✓	
If applicable, provides evidence indicating the CMO's ability to serve the intended student population; strong student outcomes and success at managing nonacademic school functions.					✓	
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>The application meets or exceeds rubric criteria.</p>						

3. School Leader	Total Score:	3.00	0	1	2	3
<i>For applicants with an identified school leader:</i> Provides the name, qualifications, experiences, certifications, and education of the proposed lead administrator; offers evidence to demonstrate whether the individual has a record of leading a high-quality school.						✓
<i>For applicants without an identified school leader:</i> Presents a plan for recruiting and hiring a proven school leader and clearly articulates the characteristics and skills that the proposed school will evaluate in selecting a leader.		N/A				
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>The principal, identified as Ms. Kim Raccio, is the founding principal of the Brooklyn Prospect Charter School in 2012 and is currently the principal for BPCS Middle School. Ms. Raccio has two prior school openings with Prospect Schools and an extensive background in education and has previously led an International Baccalaureate (IB) school.</p>						
4. Evidence of Support	Total Score:	3.00	0	1	2	3
Provides evidence that the proposed school is welcomed by the local community.						✓
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>The applicant has clearly spent a great deal of time building relationships with community members and Danbury stakeholders.</p> <p>Ample evidence of community interest and support is provided through parent statements and letters of support from municipal and state officials.</p>						

III. Student Composition, Services, and Policies						
1. School Demographics	Total Score:	1.75	0	1	2	3
Describes the needs and demographics of the community and student population to be served by the proposed school.					✓	
Explains how the proposed school model meets the needs of students and will likely increase student achievement.					✓	
Provides a sound enrollment plan, including a clear rationale for grades served, enrollment, and growth.					✓	
Describes sound procedures for encouraging involvement by parents and guardians of enrolled students in student learning, school activities and school decision-making.				✓		
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>More details needed for family engagement. Handbook reference as having details needs to be incorporated in the response.</p>						

2. Special Education	Total Score:	2.00	0	1	2	3
Includes a comprehensive plan for educating students with disabilities.					✓	
Plans for adequate staffing to address the needs of students with disabilities and Section 504 Plans, including properly state-certified special education teachers(s).					✓	
Articulates a clear system to monitor student data and consider a student's eligibility for Section 504 services.					✓	
Presents a plan to engage the parents of students with disabilities.					✓	
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>The response demonstrates the ability to execute the vision described in the application.</p>						
3. English Learners (EL)	Total Score:	2.00	0	1	2	3
Provides a plan to identify and meet the learning needs of all EL students (e.g., screenings, assessments, exit criteria).					✓	
Describes how the school will provide EL students with access to the general education curriculum.					✓	
Describes how the school will involve the parents of EL students in the school, including through translation services.					✓	
Plans for adequate staffing to address the needs of EL students, including properly state-certified staff.					✓	
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>Responses meet rubric criteria.</p>						
4. Admission Policy and Criteria	Total Score:	2.00	0	1	2	3
Provides a clear and coherent admissions policy and plan that complies with C.G.S. § 10-66bb.					✓	
Provides a viable plan to attract students and families, form a diverse student body and avoid discrimination.					✓	
Shows a commitment to reduce racial, ethnic, and/or economic isolation.					✓	
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>Purely random enrolling with sibling preference. May in the future consider other factors to ensure greater diversity such as ELL status, free and reduced-price lunches (FRL) status etc.</p>						

5. Student Discipline Policies	Total Score:	1.33	0	1	2	3
Provides a clear behavior management system that encourages positive behaviors and applies consistent sanctions and interventions in response to severe infractions.				✓		
Offers educational alternatives for students who are expelled or suspended.				✓		
Provides due process safeguards for all students, including those with disabilities.					✓	
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>Note: Handbook – Appendix F referenced was general.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Definition concerns – the policies may be in conflict of state laws <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short term verses long-term suspension. Number of days that equal expulsion. Education for expelled students do not include certified staff. 						
6. Human Resource Policies	Total Score:	1.71	0	1	2	3
Defines competencies and professional standards necessary for hiring teachers, administrators, and all other school staff.					✓	
Creates processes for dismissing staff for conduct and performance issues.					✓	
Provides a sample job description that clearly articulates necessary staff competencies, expectations, and qualifications.					✓	
Provides clear and effective procedures to document efforts to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of staff.					✓	
Describes a targeted staff size and plans for staff recruitment and retention.				✓		
Presents a system to evaluate and develop teachers and administrators.					✓	
Provides human resource policies around salaries, benefits, hiring, personnel contract, and affirmative action that align to the school mission, educational philosophy, students served, and budget.				✓		
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>Employment and Human Resources Policies outlined.</p> <p>The application lacks details about how the school intends to handle/counsel at risk employees, other than references to “at will” employment.</p>						

IV. School Viability

1. Building Options	Total Score:	2.00	0	1	2	3
Provides a plan for identifying and acquiring a suitable facility to support the proposed school.					✓	
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>The application presents three alternative options for a temporary facility. However, decisions will need to be finalized in a timely manner in order to allow ample time for needed renovations. The school plans to open in the 2018 school year.</p>						
2. Financial Plan	Total Score:	1.63	0	1	2	3
Provides a thorough budget that reflects all commitments outlined in the application through the proposed school's fifth year of operation, and shows sound financial planning and the fiscal viability of the school.					✓	
Includes financial projections that account for all sources of revenue (e.g., state per-pupil grant; other federal, state, and private grants; donations and fundraising).					✓	
Provides a detailed budget narrative that explains budget line items and short- and long-term projections, offering a clear rationale for calculations and assumptions.				✓		
Presents a pre-opening budget statement detailing and explaining estimated start-up activities.				✓		
Provides a cash flow projection for the first year of operation that shows a sophisticated understanding of expenditures mapped against available revenue during the year.					✓	
Presents a schedule of borrowings and repayments that aligns to the pre-opening budget, the projected five-year budget, and the cash flow statement.				✓		
Presents a financial management system and processes aligned to GAAP with adequate internal controls, including a description of the fiscal staff positions, qualifications, and duties.					✓	
Describes how the school will track finances in its daily operations, and how the governing council will provide oversight.					✓	
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>Finances require the significant grant contribution that is shown from the Buck Foundation, but that will need to be verified.</p>						

3. Self-Evaluation and Accountability	Total Score:	2.00	0	1	2	3
Identifies clear and operational goals at all levels (e.g., school-wide, grade-level, classroom, staff, and student).					✓	
Provides clear systems of accountability for all stakeholders.					✓	
Identifies robust data systems and processes to regularly track leading and lagging indicators of student achievement, student enrollment, and organizational operations and effectiveness.					✓	
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>Leadership goals could be clearer.</p>						
4. Timetable	Total Score:	1.50	0	1	2	3
Provides a thorough action plan, outlining activities leading up to the successful launch of the proposed school (e.g., projects, staff responsible, deadlines, status, and resource alignment).					✓	
Demonstrates strong forethought and project management, showing the team's ability to coordinate, manage, track, and execute multiple work streams simultaneously.				✓		
<p>Justifications:</p> <p>Action list is appropriate.</p> <p>Little to no detail on managing and coordinating this project.</p>						

Evaluation Summary

Proposed Charter School Name: Danbury Prospect Charter School Date: 02 / 09 /2018

I. School Vision and Design		
1. Mission and Vision Statements	Score:	2.25
2. Educational Philosophy	Score:	3.00
3. Curriculum	Score:	1.43
4. Instruction	Score:	2.25
5. Student Assessment	Score:	1.63
II. Strength of Organizational Effort		
1. Experience and Expertise of Founders	Score:	3.00
2. School Governance and Management	Score:	2.38
3. School Leader	Score:	3.00
4. Evidence of Support	Score:	3.00
III. Student Composition, Services, and Policies		
1. School Demographics	Score:	1.75
2. Special Education	Score:	2.00
3. English Learners	Score:	2.00
4. Admission Policy and Criteria	Score:	2.00
5. Student Discipline Policies	Score:	1.33
6. Human Resource Policies	Score:	1.71
IV. School Viability		
1. Building Options	Score:	2.00
2. Financial Plan	Score:	1.63
3. Self-Evaluation and Accountability	Score:	2.00
4. Timetable	Score:	1.50
Total Score:		39.9

Section 4: Preferences

1a. Serving High-Need Student Populations through Establishment of Educational Programs	Yes	No
1b. Serving High-Need Student Populations by Using Specific Strategies to Attract, Enroll and Retain Students from the above populations	Yes	No
2. Turning Around an Existing School	Yes	No
3. Opening in a Priority School District or District with at Least 75 Percent Racial or Ethnic Minority Enrollment	Yes	No
4. Being a Higher Education Institution	Yes	No
5. Locating the School at a Work Site	Yes	No
Justifications:		



Sal V. Pascarella, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

DANBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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March 5, 2018

Mr. Robert E. Kelly
Charter School Program Manager
State Department of Education
Box 2219
Hartford, CT 06145

Dear Mr. Kelly,

In response to your letter of February 13, 2018 requesting comments from our local Board of Education, I am forwarding you the questions that members from the Danbury Board of Education would like a response. My understanding is that your Department will be doing a presentation to the State Board of Education at its April meeting and if the Prospect Charter School moves forward you will be scheduling a hearing in Danbury at some point. Please be sure to notify me of the date of the hearing if it moves forward.

Questions from the Board of Education:

- Is this really zero cost to the district?
- If not, what are the actual costs (i.e. busing, SPED support, etc)?
- Where is the proposed location(s)?
- Is the funding guaranteed in perpetuity?
- Who determines curriculum?
- Does the Danbury School Board have any say in the Charter Schools policies?
- Do we have a means of discourse between the Danbury School Board, our superintendent and administration and the directors of the charter?
- Is the charter going to follow our school calendar, dismissal times including PD days?
- With the large Spanish speaking population in our schools we would like an assurance that they will require that their student body be representative of this community. That is they will reach out to our minority population to educate them what this school is and the concept of the lottery.
- Also most important, that no education funds are diverted from Danbury Public Schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sal V. Pascarella".

Sal V. Pascarella, Ed.D.



CITY OF DANBURY

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
155 DEER HILL AVENUE
DANBURY, CONNECTICUT 06810

MARK D. BOUGHTON
MAYOR

(203) 797-4511
FAX (203) 796-1666
m.boughton@danbury-ct.gov

Public Hearing: Danbury Prospect Charter School - proposed
Thursday, March 15, 2018
Testimony of Mayor Mark Boughton
Danbury, CT

Members of the Connecticut State Board of Education, it pleases me to submit this written testimony in support of Danbury Prospect Charter School - a proposed public charter school aiming to serve students in grades 6-10 in the City of Danbury.

As Mayor, I have made it an ongoing priority to strengthen and support our city's public schools by adding a high-quality public charter school to our city's educational landscape; Danbury Prospect Charter School would do just that.

Danbury is Connecticut's fastest growing city. Our existing city schools are doing their best to accommodate the increasing number of students, however, they are struggling with issues related to overcrowding.

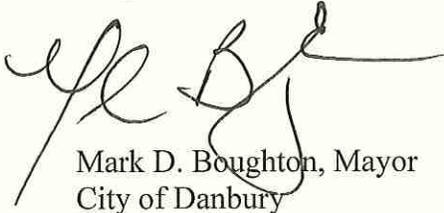
If approved, Danbury Prospect Charter School would immediately help ease that burden on our city schools. By exclusively serving students in 6th through 10th grade, Danbury Prospect would offer relief to our schools, all while providing a unique, academically challenging environment for its students. IN addition, Danbury Prospect would be the first school in our area to be modeled after the renowned International Baccalaureate (IB) framework, and would aim to share best practices with district schools.

To understand just how impactful this school can be for our community, we can look to its sister school: Brooklyn Prospect Charter School. Brooklyn Prospect already operates four highly successful schools in Brooklyn's Community School Districts 13 and 15, and that includes an elementary, two middle schools, and a high school.

Families in Danbury have demonstrated that they want options when it comes to education, and that is evidenced by the fact that our existing magnet schools have expansive waitlists. By bringing the first public charter option to our city, you would be offering families an option that is both needed and deserved.

That is why I support the addition of Danbury Prospect Charter School to our city, and I urge you to move forward with this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. D. Boughton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark D. Boughton, Mayor
City of Danbury
155 Deer Hill Ave
Danbury, CT 06810
203-797-4511



Bethel Public Schools

1 School Street, P.O. Box 253, Bethel, CT 06801
Fax: (203) 794-8723 – website: www.bethel.k12.ct.us

Christine Carver, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools
(203) 794-8601

Kristen Brooks, Ed. D.
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Theresa D. Yonsky
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Susan Budris
Director
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Michelle D. Rutledge
Director
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(203) 794-8755

Bryan Waston
Interim Director
Instructional Technology
(203) 794-8071

Robert Germinaro
Supervisor
Facility & Security Operations
(203) 794-8609

March 5, 2018

Robert Kelly
Charter School Program Manager
State of Connecticut, Department of Education
Box 2219
Hartford, CT 06145

Dear Mr. Kelly,

The Bethel Board of Education has asked me to submit the following comments with regards to the establishment of the Danbury Prospect Charter School application for the 2018-2019 school year. The Bethel Board of Education has the following concerns with regards to the establishment of this program:

1. The Bethel Board of Education has received no information regarding the educational scope of the charter program and therefore has no sense of the size and impact to our district program.
2. Your February 13, 2018 letter indicates that the establishment is “contingent on funding from the General Assembly”. Bethel, like most Connecticut communities has yet to receive our ECS allocation which was included in the bipartisan budget approved by the Legislature. While we understand that Charter School Programs are a separate fund, we believe that full funding of Connecticut’s 500,000 student public schools should be the state's first priority.
3. Notification of a potential New Charter School, application dated February 13, of 2018 that was received in my office on February 20th and calling for feedback by March 6th

“Our Primary Purpose is to Improve Student Achievement.”

does not provide the Bethel Board of Education adequate time to budget for the impact of such program. The budgetary impact particularly centers around Special Education tuition. This has the potential to significantly impact resources in our own programs. The impact would be even more acute since, historically, Bethel is most always shorted upwards of \$200,000 in Special Education Excess Cost reimbursement.

4. We are concerned about the application process for this school. While the application states open enrollment, a school of this type has rigorous standards. If granted a charter, the school should be required to accept students as reflected in the broader community.
5. Once accepted, the school should not be allowed to counsel students with the ultimate intent of having them return to their home District, i.e. once the student's application has been vetted they should become a qualified member of the Charter School. The believed practice of sending difficult-to-manage students back to their home District usurps a school's fundamental responsibility to reach and teach ALL children! This frequently happens in charter and magnet school programs. We would implore that prior to opening additional Charter Programs, that laws be passed prohibiting practices like this.
6. Lastly, considering the extremely difficult financial straits Connecticut finds itself in, how can a New Charter School even be considered? Danbury and Bethel are two Public School Districts in the state that are experiencing student enrollment growth while basic education grant funding is either inadequate, being reduced, or both. Our stakeholders believe the state has a moral and fundamental obligation to protect and support the public education of its children, especially in our Danbury area School Districts where good teaching and learning is occurring. Options make total sense when affordable or where students are being deprived of a solid 21st Century educational experience, which is not the case in this instance. The financial realities of the time should weigh heavily on a decision like this.

I want to thank you for taking the opportunity to speak with me regarding the Danbury Prospect Charter Program today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christine Carver', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christine Carver, Ed.D.
Bethel Public Schools

EASTON, REDDING, AND REGION 9 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

654 MOREHOUSE ROAD, P.O. BOX 500 EASTON, CONNECTICUT 06612

OFFICE (203) 261-2513 FAX (203) 261-4549

WEB SITE: WWW.ER9.ORG

THOMAS H. McMORRAN, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

February 22, 2018

Mr. Robert E. Kelly
Charter School Program Manager
Box 2219
Hartford, Connecticut 06145

Dear Mr. Kelly,

I received your letter of February 13, 2018, in reference to the proposed Danbury Prospect Charter School.

Given the difficulties that a city such as Danbury faces to operate its public school system, it seems an inappropriate allocation of scarce funding to initiate another charter school in the that district.

I do not believe the presence of a new charter school would have any meaningful impact on the schools in Easton, Redding or Region 9.

Respectfully,



Tom McMorrان, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Easton, Redding, Region 9 Schools

Attachment F

From: Roy, Alicia <roy.alicia@newfairfieldschools.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 06, 2018 3:53 PM
To: Kelly, Robert <Robert.Kelly@ct.gov>
Subject: comment regarding application for Danbury Prospect Charter School

Dear Mr. Kelly,

I am writing as the Superintendent of Schools in New Fairfield regarding correspondence you sent to me with respect to the application for the Danbury Prospect Charter School. At this time there is not enough information for me to respond in support of this charter. I speak for myself when I say that I am concerned, as we have a declining enrollment in New Fairfield, that students could potentially be allowed to attend this school in Danbury. Funding for students would also have to come from New Fairfield to support the students who would attend; e.g., busing would be required. We cannot afford to lose funding for our school district. In addition I am proud of the Advanced Placement (AP) opportunities we offer, and believe the Danbury Prospect Charter School, if it is to be an International Baccalaureate school, could draw students who are excelling in AP from New Fairfield to Danbury.

Sincerely,

Dr. Alicia M. Roy
Superintendent
New Fairfield Public Schools
3 Brush Hill Road
New Fairfield, CT 06812
(203) 312-5770
(203) 312-5609 fax
[Follow me on Twitter](#)

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State of Connecticut

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL**

REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL S. FERGUSON
ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-EIGHTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 4200
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HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

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CAPITOL: (860) 240-8700
Michael.Ferguson@housegop.ct.gov

MEMBER
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
INTERNSHIP COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Testimony in Support of the Establishment of the Danbury Prospect Charter School
March 15, 2018

I am writing to express my support for the establishment of the Danbury Prospect Charter School. As a member of the Connecticut General Assembly representing the 138th District, a member of the legislature's Education Committee, former Danbury Board of Education member, and proud graduate of the Danbury Public Schools I have consistently advocated for our students so that they have the chance to have a strong education which helps them have a bright future. Families in Danbury should have public school options to meet the unique needs of the children in our city. Danbury can certainly benefit from an additional middle school option which is what Danbury Prospect will be. This need comes from Danbury being the fastest growing city in Connecticut. The school age population has grown 17% in the last 10 years, and opening this charter school would help to alleviate school district overcrowding within our middle schools while still maintaining a small school culture for its students. It can also serve an important academic role as middle school is such a critical period for students.

I have met with members of the Danbury Prospect founding team and support groups from the time they started this process. Honestly, based on my strong advocacy and connections within the traditional Danbury Public Schools, I was a little skeptical at first about what Danbury Prospect Charter School could mean for Danbury. However, as I continued to learn more about Danbury Prospect and how they would contribute to our community, I am no longer skeptical. I have been impressed by the commitment of all those involved in Danbury Prospect as they have and continue to reach out to civic leaders, have such passionate parents advocating for a strong educational system, and have promised to work with the community to ensure that the school reflects the diversity and wealth of resources in our area. Their designed program will serve the socioeconomically and racially diverse families that make up our great city, creating an inclusive learning environment that gives students of all backgrounds an equal chance to succeed. We know that not all children learn the same way. All parents, regardless of their income or means, should be able to choose what is best for their child. Danbury Prospect ultimately gives families another choice that they can pursue.

SENATOR MICHAEL A. McLACHLAN
TWENTY-FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
300 CAPITOL AVENUE, SUITE 3400
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

DEPUTY SENATE REPUBLICAN MAJORITY LEADER



State of Connecticut
SENATE

CO-CHAIR
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
GENERAL BONDING SUBCOMMITTEE

VICE-CHAIR
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE

MEMBER
EXEC. & LEGIS. NOMINATIONS
FINANCE, REVENUE & BONDING COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

March 15, 2018

Dear Chairperson Taylor and distinguished members of the State Board of Education,

I write today to support the approval of Danbury Prospect Charter School. As a native of Danbury, and as a State Senator representing the community here, I know first-hand how critically important educational options are to our families and school children.

Charter schools are making a difference in the lives of children across Connecticut, but we have not had the privilege of one opening here yet, despite the fact that Danbury is the state's fastest growing city. As I am sure you are also aware, our schools here have been grappling with a very serious issue: school overcrowding, and Danbury Prospect would help ease that incredible burden.

With the opening of Danbury Prospect Charter School, our students would also be given the opportunity to be enrolled in academically challenging programs, like the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. It would open new doors and academic challenges to our students, which will help them reach their academic and future goals.

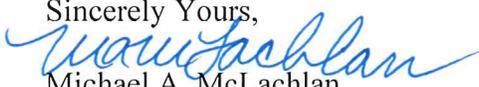
I have been continually impressed with the diligence and dedication of the school's founding team. They are striving for excellence in our city by working to bring this highly successful school model to Danbury.

At the center of the school will be an exemplary teaching staff, one that will reflect the diversity of our community here in Danbury. The emphasis on a strong group of dedicated teachers has been central to the Danbury Prospect team's plans from the start, and I have no doubt they will recruit, hire, and train only the very best.

All parents deserve the right to choose the best school for their child. Parents in Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven, and beyond have that ability to choose a charter school. Danbury parents deserve the same - to find the best fit for their child, whether it is a district or a charter school. That choice will never be open to them if we do not bring Danbury Prospect to our city.

Thank you for your consideration, and I hope the State Board approves this stellar application.

Sincerely Yours,


Michael A. McLachlan
State Senator – 24th District