

Comparison of Innovation Schools, Pilot Schools, Horace Mann Charter Schools, and Commonwealth Charter Schools in Massachusetts – Updated April 2016

Category	Innovation Schools	Boston Pilot Schools ¹	Horace Mann Charter Schools ²	Commonwealth Charter Schools
Laws/Regulations	G.L. c. 71, s. 92 (603 CMR 48.00)	Local Contract	G.L. c. 71, s. 89 (603 CMR 1.00)	G.L. c. 71, s. 89 (603 CMR 1.00)
Approval Process and Timeline				
Approval Process	Applicant submits prospectus to screening committee that includes the superintendent, school committee member, and union representative; develops innovation plan with stakeholders; and secures approval by the local school committee (the approval process is entirely locally based).	Pilot Schools require approval of the local district superintendent and school committee.	Horace Mann applications are accepted in three categories: 1. A Horace Mann I (HM I) application may be submitted to create a new school with the approval of the local collective bargaining unit and the school committee. 2. A Horace Mann II application may be submitted as a conversion of an existing public school with the approval of the school committee. Any MOU modifying provisions of a collective bargaining agreement must be approved by a majority of faculty at the school, with the vote to be held within 30 days of submission of the application. 3. A Horace Mann III application may be submitted to create a new school with the approval of the school committee. An agreement with the local collective bargaining unit is not required prior to BESE approval of a Horace Mann III charter school. For all three types, approval by BESE is required, and the charter is granted to an independent board of trustees at each school.	Approval by BESE is required, and the charter is granted to an independent board of trustees at each school.
Application Timeline	The statute provides standard timeframes for each stage of the application and approval process, but the actual dates for submission and review established by the district and applicant.	Locally-determined.	The charter application cycle commences annually each year in June, with a final application due no later than November 15, and charters awarded in February. However, HM II application may be submitted at any time.	

¹ Pilot schools are locally authorized with no formal state involvement and no authorizing state legislation. Pilot schools were first developed in Boston, so Boston’s policies are described, though variations of the pilot school model have also been started in Springfield and Fitchburg.

² The Achievement Gap legislation, Chapter 12 of the Acts of 2010, allowed for three variations of the Horace Mann (HM) model: HM I – the traditional HM; HM II – the conversion HM; and HM III – 14 new Horace Mann schools, four of which must be in Boston.

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<i>Authorizing Entity</i>	School Committee has oversight authority.	The superintendent and the Boston Teachers Union (BTU)/BPS Joint Steering Committee have oversight authority.	Oversight BESE has oversight authority.	
<i>Accountability</i>	<p>Innovation schools are subject to the state’s overall accountability system as any other public school in the Commonwealth. Additionally, the innovation plan, which includes information about the areas of autonomy/flexibility, related strategies that will be implemented in the school, and Measurable Annual Goals (MAGS), is approved and renewed by school committee for up to 5 years. The superintendent conducts an annual evaluation to assess progress with regard to stated goals in the innovation plan. If benchmarks are not met school committee can amend the innovation plan or revoke the authorization of the school.</p> <p>All Innovation Schools are required to complete an annual report of how schools are doing in meeting their MAGS which is submitted to the local school committee and the Commissioner.</p>	Pilot schools are subject to the state’s overall accountability system as any other public school in the Commonwealth. Additionally, other accountability processes may be established locally. For example, the BPS/BTU developed an intervention process for schools of concern, and until recent years a School Quality Review was conducted for each school every five years.	<p>Charter renewal every five years by BESE; BESE can impose conditions and/or probation on renewal and require that certain benchmarks be met.</p> <p>All charter schools must submit an annual report to BESE and the local school committee. Schools must make the annual report available to every parent or guardian of enrolled students and to every parent or guardian who expresses interest in enrolling their child in that charter school. Each charter school is required to make the annual report available on its website.</p>	
<i>Audit</i>	There is no requirement for an annual audit of the innovation school, as general school funds are managed by the local district.	There is no requirement for an annual audit, as general school funds are managed by the local district.	An independent entity must conduct an annual audit and produce a report, as school funds are managed by the school and its board of trustees.	

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	Union and District			
<i>Contractual Work Conditions</i>	Waivers from and/or modifications to collective bargaining agreements must be described within the innovation plan. In the case of a conversion, the innovation plan requires 2/3 approval of teachers in that school; in the case of a new school, the terms of the innovation plan must be negotiated with the local teacher union. If an agreement cannot be reached, an expedited arbitration process is described in the statute, and states, "The arbitrator shall consider the parties' positions and the needs of the students in the district. The arbitrator's decision shall be consistent with the contents of the innovation plan developed by the applicant. The arbitrator shall, within 14 days of the close of the hearing, submit a decision which shall be final and binding on the parties. "	These schools may be exempt from most work conditions in the local contract. For example, in Boston, the contract requires compensation for time worked over 95 hours above the BTU contract hours. All other work conditions at the school level are defined in an election-to-work agreement.	Waivers from and/or modifications to collective bargaining agreements are detailed in the charter application and MOU submitted to the BESE. The executed MOU of HM I schools includes the agreement of the relevant collective bargaining unit. The executed MOU of HM II conversion schools are approved by a majority faculty vote. The 14 "new" HM III schools require negotiation and approval of the MOU after the charter is awarded; if agreement with the relevant collective bargaining unit is not reached at least 30 days before scheduled opening, the school will operate under the terms of its charter until an agreement is reached, including exemption from all union and school committee work rules to the extent provided by their charter.	Because Commonwealth charter schools are independent of the local school district, teachers are not covered by the local collective bargaining agreement. Teachers have the right to establish a bargaining unit for the charter school under G.L. c. 150E.
<i>School Committee/District Policies</i>	Any modifications to or exemptions from school committee policies must be described in the innovation plan.	Pilot Schools are exempt from most school committee policies.	Horace Mann charter schools are exempt from school committee policies as outlined in their charters.	Not applicable, as the schools operate independently from the school district.
<i>Dispute Resolution</i>	Any modifications to or exemptions from school committee policies must be described in the innovation plan.	Each Pilot School must have in place a dispute resolution process, approved by the governing board that a teacher and staff members may use.	Grievance procedures are covered by the collective bargaining agreement, unless exemption is provided by an MOU or addressed by their charter.	Grievance procedures may be developed at each school.
	Personnel			
<i>Educator Evaluation</i>	Any modifications to educator evaluation regulations must be outlined in the innovation plan and approved by the Commissioner. However, the innovation plan may outline an educator evaluation system that differs from the district's, but still complies with educator evaluation regulations, without Commissioner approval.	Must comply with educator evaluation regulations, but otherwise determined locally. For example, Pilot Schools voluntarily agreed to use the BPS evaluation procedure for teachers, but they may also establish separate and additional teacher evaluation processes.	Must comply with educator evaluation regulations, and otherwise covered by the collective bargaining agreement, unless exemption is provided by an MOU or addressed by their charter.	Educator evaluation systems can be developed by each school.
<i>Layoffs</i>	This issue is not addressed in the Innovation Schools statute, but it could be addressed in the innovation plan.	Layoffs are determined by the collective bargaining agreement.	If specified in the charter or the MOU, schools may be exempt from personnel "bumping" during layoffs.	Not applicable, as the schools operate separately from school districts.

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			Funding	
Facilities	Facilities are provided by the local district, unless otherwise specified in the innovation plan.	Pilot Schools do not pay for the facility if housed in city-owned building, but they must pay for the facility if housed in a non-city owned building (currently, all Pilot Schools are housed in city-owned facilities).	Facilities arrangements and possible costs are negotiated by school board of trustees and local school committee, and described in the MOU; for example, the school occupies a city-owned building, or receives additional funding to occupy a non-city owned site (with approval of school committee).	The school must pay for its facility.
Teacher Hiring/ Salary Level	Teachers are required to be licensed, and salaries are established by the local collective bargaining agreement unless otherwise specified in the innovation plan.	Teachers are required to be licensed, and salaries are established by the local collective bargaining agreement.	Teachers are required to be licensed, and salaries are established by the local collective bargaining agreement.	ELL teachers must be licensed; all other teachers are not required to be licensed but must take and pass, within their first year of employment at a charter school, the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure. Salaries are determined by the charter school.
State/Federal Grants	State and federal grants, such as Title I and IDEA grants, will be received through the local school district. However, the operators have the authority to secure supplemental funding to implement the innovation plan.	State and federal grants, such as Title I and IDEA grants, will be received through the local school district.	The school may choose either to apply for entitlement/allocation funds itself, or it may assign its entitlement to the school district and make arrangements with the superintendent so that the charter school students will benefit from the funds.	State and federal grants are received directly by each school.
Funding Formula	The funding formula/budget process must be articulated in the innovation plan, and funds may carry over from year to year.	Pilot Schools receive a budget through the district's student-weighted funding formula, similar to all district schools, and have total freedom in allocation of funds.	Each school's annual appropriation is an amount agreed upon by the school and the school committee as articulated in the MOU (the appropriation must be comparable to district school funding).	Each school receives student tuition directly from the state based on the statutory formula and actual enrollment.
Central Discretionary Services	Schools can address this topic in their innovation plan.	Select discretionary central office services may be purchased, or the per-pupil funds may be added to its lump sum budget.	The MOU describes the options available to the school to purchase or obtain discretionary central office services from the district.	Not applicable, as the schools operate independently from the school district.

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			Admissions	
Projected enrollment	This issue is not addressed in the Innovation Schools statute, but it can be addressed in the innovation plan.	Maximum enrollment is established in a Pilot School’s plan, but may be adjusted through agreement between the district and the school’s governing board.	Maximum enrollment is established in the charter application and as granted by BESE.	
Admissions	Existing students in the school prior to conversion to Innovation School status have the right to continue to attend. Otherwise, the school operators and leaders include the admissions process in the innovation plan.	Elementary and middle schools must use the district lottery process. While some high schools use the district lottery process, high schools may use a Pilot application and their own admissions process, but may not screen for academic achievement.	<p>Charter schools must have an open application process, and a lottery must be held if the number of applicants exceeds available spaces. Additional recruitment and retention requirements for new schools are specified in the Achievement Gap legislation, Chapter 12 of the Acts of 2010.</p> <p>In order of priorities, a Horace Mann charter school shall provide an enrollment preference to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. for the initial lottery, any students attending said school, or attending school in the school building previously occupied by said school, on the date that the final application is filed with the Board; 2. for the initial lottery, siblings of any students attending said school, or attending school in the school building previously occupied by said school, on the date that the final application is filed with the Board; 3. in all subsequent lotteries, siblings of students currently attending the school; 4. students who are currently enrolled in the public schools of the district in which the Horace Mann charter school is located; and 5. students who reside in the city or town in which the Horace Mann charter school is located. 	<p>A Commonwealth charter school shall provide an enrollment preference to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Siblings of students already attending the school; and 2. Students who reside in the city or town in which a Commonwealth charter school is located or, in the case of a regional charter school, to students who reside within the charter school's region.