

Brass City Charter School has grant extended

May 2, 2018 - Local - Tagged: Greater Waterbury Towns: Waterbury CT - 1 comment

BY MICHAEL GAGNE REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN



Brass City Charter School teacher Carrie Scalzo reads a health lesson to second-graders on Wednesday. Michael Gagne
Republican-American

WATERBURY – Brass City Charter School will continue to operate for another four years in the city.

On Wednesday, the State Board of Education voted to adopt State Department of Education Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell's recommendation to approval extending its state-granted charter until June 30, 2022.

While Brass City's initial charter – granted in 2013 and allowing the school to open at its current location, the former St. Margaret School building on Chestnut Avenue – was for five years, its renewed charter has been abbreviated by one year, amid state education officials' concerns that over student achievement on the 2017 Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium tests had declined considerably over the prior year, in what have been the school's first two years of testing.

For state officials, Brass City's overall strengths appeared to outweigh their concerns around the school. Officials highlighted an overall performance index in math and English that exceeded state and Waterbury Public School district averages, including for high needs students.

Officials also highlight Brass City's state suspension rate, which was below 2 percent, while the overall state suspension rate is 6.7 percent. Chronic absenteeism at the school is also below the state average.

The school serves 253 students, with a waitlist of almost 400 students.

"While in the past renewals had been for five years, the state recently began to implement a rubric that allows for more limited renewals," said Barbara Ruggiero, executive director and co-founder of Brass City Charter.

Ruggiero said of the group of charter schools up for renewal, Brass City appeared to receive the longest renewal.

“They were very complimentary of us,” she said.

Nancy Landona, who co-founded the school with Ruggiero, said of the renewal process “they want you to succeed, they are there to support us all.”

The renewal allows the school to achieve its full pre-school-to-grade-8 growth. Having recently acquired the now former St. Margaret of Scotland Roman Catholic Church building, rectory and convent – after the church’s former parishioners unsuccessfully challenged the sale – the school leaders will look to begin renovation as soon as school closes for the summer.

Ruggiero said she anticipated those renovations would be completed in time to allow the school to achieve its full-growth.