

**APPROVE THE SMALL SCHOOLS CONVERSION PLAN TO CONVERT
REZIN ORR COMMUNITY ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL INTO FOUR SMALL SCHOOLS**

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:

That the Chicago Board of Education (the "Board") approve the small schools conversion plan to convert Rezin Orr Community Academy High School ("Orr") into the following four small high schools located on the Orr campus:

1. Phoenix Military Academy opened in September 2002,
2. Mose Vines Prep Academy opened in September 2003,
3. Applied Arts, Science and Technology Academy ("AASTA") opening September 2004, and
4. Excel/ Future Teachers Academy opening September 2004.

PURPOSE:

This document details the plan for converting Orr over a two year period from September 2002 through September 2004 into four small high schools each with its own principal, unit number, budget, teaching staff, student body and governance structure in accordance with the Board's "Small Schools Policy" (Board Report 02-0424-PO03).

BACKGROUND:

In December 2001, CPS issued a Request for Proposals to CPS high schools to convert to small schools. In response to this RFP, Orr submitted a Letter of Intent to convert to small schools followed by a written conversion proposal in March 2002. In April 2002 Orr's conversion proposal was preliminarily approved by the Office of Small Schools. On June 7, 2002 CPS conducted, in accordance with Board Policy 02-0424-PO03, a public hearing on the proposed conversion of Orr. Additional public hearings will be conducted in Spring 2004 prior to the opening of the AASTA and Excel Academies in accordance with the Modified Desegregation Consent Decree.

TEXT:

I. Introduction: Student Needs and a Vision for Education

Orr serves a high-needs population of approximately 1200 students with more than 95% coming from low-income families and 26% receiving Special Education services. Dropout rates in recent years have been over 25%. The mobility rate of 54% is twice as high as the district average and chronic truancy has been over 10%. The racial makeup of the student population is approximately 83% African-American and 17% Hispanic.

The Orr vision has been to empower its students with knowledge and life skills. The administrators, teachers, members of the Local School Council ("LSC") believe that Orr's vision best can be achieved through the creation of four independent, autonomous small schools, each with a distinct focus.

The following conversion plan describes the general educational goals for the four small schools along with the specific steps that shall be taken to successfully implement the conversion of Orr into four small high schools.

II. General Educational Goals and Evaluation Plan for the New Small Schools

Each of the new small schools established on the Orr campus will significantly improve student performance in the following areas: (1) attendance (2) academic performance (3) graduation rates, and (4) the percentage of students who go on to enroll and succeed in college or other post-secondary institutions. Over the next five years, students enrolled in the four small schools will meet or exceed average Chicago Public Schools student performance in each of the four areas identified above.

Specific areas for performance measurement will include: (1) attendance (2) dropout and graduation rates (3) CPS and school-administered tests, and (4) college enrollment rates. Annual improvements in performance will determine success in these standard areas of measurement.

Each small school will be subject to the same accountability and evaluation measures established by the Board for all Chicago Public Schools. Additional assessment measures may be used to study the small schools environment. The progress of each new small school will also be evaluated annually by independent evaluators retained by the Office of Small Schools to assess both the success of the conversion as well as the progress of each small school.

III. The Orr Conversion Plan

A. The Building

The Orr buildings and campus facilities are well designed to support conversion to a small schools arrangement. The building includes four separate academic houses, each with its own cafeteria, learning resource center, academic rooms (including science labs), student lockers, restrooms and administrative offices. Each of the four small schools will have exclusive use of one academic house – each with its own entrance from within the building.

The auditorium, athletic facilities, health clinic, main office, etc. are on the first floor, with the academic houses on floors two and three. The first floor and basement also have special use rooms, including a variety of labs and an in-house television studio. Some of these rooms will be designated for exclusive use of a particular small school, and others will be set aside for shared use.

Notable facility modifications necessary to accommodate the four small schools include office space build-out, classroom configuration modifications and renovations related to a school's educational focus. Audits will be conducted to identify the level of books, furniture, supplies and equipment existing on the Orr campus available for use by the new small schools. The distribution of such items to the new small schools will be based, where possible, on a formula that estimates typical school starts-up needs. Additional items may be purchased where, based on this formula, there is an insufficient amount of former Orr materials to meet the small school's needs or where special materials related to a small school's educational focus are necessary.

The new small schools will establish a building sharing agreement which will outline the arrangements regarding the shared use areas of the Orr campus. Building utilities, janitorial services, security and other non-segregated resources and expenses, as applicable, will be shared and apportioned amongst the small schools in accordance with the building sharing agreement.

B. The Educational Focus and Plans for Each of the Four New Small Schools

Orr will be transformed into four separate, independent and autonomous academies each with a distinct mission and educational focus. A brief description of each small school's educational focus and goals is provided below. Detailed descriptions are found in each small school's development plan which is available in the Office of Small Schools.

1. Phoenix Military Academy

a. Educational Focus and Goals

Phoenix Military Academy ("the Academy") is a CPS military academy with a strong Junior Officer Training Corp ("JROTC") leadership component. The Academy seeks to develop young people so that they may become citizens with leadership, character and a vision for our nation. The Academy's theme is service learning, integrating JROTC and a team-based, problem-solving approach with an innovative core academic program. The mission of the Academy is to promote student development in five areas of focus: (1) character (2) citizenship (3) service (4) leadership, and (5) academics.

b. The Academy will accomplish its educational goals by:

- (1) maintaining a highly motivated and professional cadre of staff and faculty;
- (2) fostering a positive, disciplined learning environment;
- (3) providing an innovative, effective and challenging curriculum; and
- (4) establishing a program of instruction which offers students stimulating opportunities for service that build teamwork, self-confidence, self-esteem and leadership.

2. Mose Vines Prep Academy

a. Educational Focus and Goals

The vision of Mose Vines Prep Academy ("Vines") is for all students to reach their individual potential by becoming independent, self-disciplined, self-motivated learners. Students will become productive citizens who are prepared for successes in post-secondary education. The main focus of the school will be on the Paideia model of instruction (which utilizes a combination of three instructional techniques: didactic instruction, coaching of academic skills, and Paideia seminar discussion) and a strong freshman program that uses an outcomes-based learning model along with an intensive reading class. Vines also will focus on parental and community involvement by forming community partnerships and implementing a modified Family and Schools Together (FAST) program. FAST is a collaborative parent-professional partnership program which builds protective factors to reduce risk for alcohol and other drug abuse, school failure, and juvenile delinquency.

b. Vines will accomplish its educational goals by:

- (1) a strategy of acceleration rather than remediation;
- (2) a required freshman program with an intensive reading focus; and
- (3) a classical curriculum with enrichment and honors programs.

3. Applied Arts, Science and Technology Academy

a. Educational Focus and Goals

The educational focus of the Applied Arts, Science and Technology Academy ("AASTA") will be to offer a rigorous college preparation curriculum, with an emphasis in science, mathematics, food technology and graphic arts. AASTA will provide students with a challenging, project-based learning program that will prepare them for post-secondary education and the competitive job market. The school is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that promotes exploration, responsibility, respect and enthusiasm for learning. AASTA is designed to accommodate the diverse needs of students, to empower them, and to ensure a sense of belonging, so that they may experience success.

b. AASTA will accomplish its educational goals by integrating technology across curriculum and addressing various learning styles by using the CPS Programs of Study with a cross-curriculum project-based learning approach.

4. Excel/ Future Teachers Academy

a. Educational Focus and Goals

Excel is a future teacher/future leader small school. The educational mission of Excel/Future Teachers Academy ("Excel") is to motivate, teach, support and encourage a new generation of learners to pursue high academic and career goals. Excel will focus on the profession of teaching and on leadership.

b. Excel will accomplish its goals by:

- (1) providing elective courses that further enrich student learning in the core curriculum subjects;
- (2) implementing a specific skill building sequence at each grade level; and
- (3) providing seniors with college credit education course through one of the school's university partners.

C. Attendance Boundaries

During the conversion period, Orr's boundaries remained the same and students who were entitled to attend Orr could choose between enrolling in a small school or the main Orr High School. Following the closure of Orr, the former Orr attendance boundaries will apply for all the Orr campus small schools.

D. Student Recruitment and Admissions

Each small school is responsible for recruiting its own students in a fair and cooperative manner with the other small schools resident on the Orr campus. The Campus Manager and the four small school principals will visit each of the feeder schools in the Orr network to market the distinctive advantages of each of the academies and recruit new students. Brochures and other informational materials will be made available to the feeder schools, parents and community members.

Where applicants outnumber student seats, the small schools will employ a lottery. Each small school shall be non-selective, enrolling students from Orr's historic feeder schools as well as students matriculating from the closing of Orr. If enrollment from these sources does not exceed the enrollment cap, students from other CPS regions will be accepted. The process for student admissions shall be guided by the goals outlined in the Modified Desegregation Consent Decree.

E. Enrollment Caps

Each small school's total enrollment should at no time exceed 500 students, with no more than 125 students per 9th grade class.

F. Small Schools Governance

1. Small Schools Temporary Advisory Councils:

A Temporary Advisory Council ("TAC") will be established at each new small school that is established on the Orr campus to provide appropriate oversight and support. The TAC will exist for a period of approximately 2 years from the time the school opens. The interim principal will identify the members of the TAC which shall be comprised of the interim principal, teachers, parents, students, curriculum area experts and community members. All TAC members proposed

by the interim principal are subject to approval by the Area Instructional Officer. The TAC will make recommendations to the interim principal regarding school matters such as textbook selection, school improvement plan, budget, staffing, shared campus facilities, school uniforms/dress code.

2. *Small Schools Governance:*

Following the second year of school operation, each new small school established under the Orr Conversion Plan will be governed by the Board, pursuant to Illinois School Code 105 ILCS 5/34-2.4b. The composition of the LSC will be determined as follows:

a. The size and composition of the alternative LSC for the Phoenix Military Academy will be consistent or the Guidelines for Military Academy Board of Governors (Board Report 03-0924-EX01).

b. The size and composition of the LSC for the Mose Vines, AASTA and Excel Academies will be an alternative LSC consistent with the Guidelines and Procedures for the Operation of Local School Councils at Small Schools (Board Report 98-0429-EX2). Notwithstanding the foregoing, at the end of the second year of any of the small school's operation, school and community partners may submit to the CEO a request for the school to have an elected Local School Council. Any such request is subject to approval by the Board.

3. *Orr LSC:*

During the conversion process from September 2002 until July 2004, the Orr LSC exercised that authority granted to it by the appropriate statutes, Board policies and rules. The Orr LSC will have the authority to advise and make recommendations to the TACs established at each new small school on the Orr campus. Following the full conversion of Orr and a Board action to close the school (currently planned for June 30, 2004), the Orr LSC will be dissolved.

4. *Transition Committee and Multi-School Council:*

During the conversion period, all schools located on the Orr campus will participate in a transition committee that consists of teachers, Orr local school council members and administrators to identify issues related to the conversion of Orr. Once all small schools have been created and Orr High School has been closed, a multi-school council will be established to coordinate the needs and address common concerns related to shared facilities, staff resources, equipment, etc.

5. *Small Schools Principal Appointments:*

Each small school will have its own principal and such other administrative positions as determined necessary by the Office of Small Schools in coordination with the Budget Office. The CEO will appoint an interim principal for the opening of each new small school. This interim principal will serve until such time as the CEO names a replacement interim principal or until a contract principal is appointed by the Board. Each school's Temporary Advisory Council may establish a principal selection committee to submit recommendations on principal candidates to the CEO.

6. *Orr School Closing:*

At the end of the final year of the conversion process, the Board will conduct a hearing on the closing of Orr pursuant to the Board's policy on school closings (Board Report 04-0225-PO2). At such time as the Board authorizes the closure, Orr will cease to operate as a school. The Orr unit number may remain open for administrative purposes related to the operations of the new small schools on the Orr campus.

G. Staffing

To the extent possible, current Orr staff whose qualifications, expertise and educational philosophy meets with the requirements for the new small school will be given hiring priority. During the conversion process, new staff will be hired for each new small school in accordance with Board hiring policies and procedures. Hiring and/or reassignment shall reflect the goals of the Modified Desegregation Consent Decree. Upon the closing of Orr, Orr teachers who have not been reassigned to one of the new small schools on the Orr campus shall become reassigned teachers pursuant to the Board's policy "Reassignment and Layoff of Regularly Certified and Appointed Teachers Due to Changes in Staffing Needs" (Board Report 97-0723-PO2). Detailed staffing plans are found in each small school's development plan which is available in the Office of Small Schools.

Each small school will be staffed with a Principal, Counselor and clerk in the first year of operation, regardless of the number of students enrolled. Each small school will also be granted on Head Teacher position in years one and two. In year three and beyond, each small school will be staffed with an Assistant Principal position. Each small high school will have a minimum of seven subject teachers per grade level (i.e. at 125 students, one full-time position for every five class periods). Special education teachers will be assigned based on enrollment.

H. Campus Manager & Staff

Upon the opening of all four small schools, a building-wide Campus Manager with at Type 75 Certificate will be hired for the Orr campus to facilitate building sharing and to ensure that the entire facility operates smoothly. In collaboration with the small schools' principals, the Campus Manager will coordinate the use of the campus facilities including their upkeep and maintenance. The Campus Manager will also direct the annual facilities plan, serve as liaison to the CPS Property Advisor, supervise safety and security operations for the campus and provide support and coordination services related to campus facility operations.

The Orr Campus Unit shall have staff positions necessary to the functioning, maintenance and upkeep of the Orr campus facilities. Campus staff may include a building engineer, safety and security personnel and custodial, clerical and lunchroom staffs. Other additional campus staff such as payroll clerk, technology personnel and librarian may also be retained. All such campus personnel will report to the Orr Campus Manager.

I. Shared Campus Programs

The four new small schools plan to offer some common extracurricular activities including sports teams. Each school will have the option of offering school-specific teams and clubs as it deems appropriate. All joint campus teams, programs and activities will be as determined by the principals of each small school, the Campus Manager and the Area Instructional Officer.

J. Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities will be included and welcomed in each small school in a manner which complies with all applicable laws, Board policies and consent decrees. Orr's *Education Connection* LRE plan must be amended to reflect the conversion to small schools and explain how the LRE funds will be divided among or shared between the small schools.

K. External Support Partners

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation through the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative provides support and grant funding to the four new small schools on the Orr campus. Further, each school will work with an external partner to further support the school's start up and operations. The George C Marshall Foundation served as the founding external partner for the Phoenix Military Academy. The Paideia Institute serves as the primary external partner for the Mose Vines Preparatory Academy. Future Teachers Chicago/ Illinois will serve as the primary external partner for the Excel Academy. AASTA is utilizing several external partners including Loyola University.

L. Community Involvement


Forums have been held with a variety of community groups from and around the Orr neighborhood as part of both the planning and implementation of the Orr small schools conversion. The continued involvement of community groups will be maintained through participation in school governance councils and community outreach efforts.

Reviewed for Consideration:



Barbara Eason-Watkins
Chief Education Officer

Respectfully Submitted:



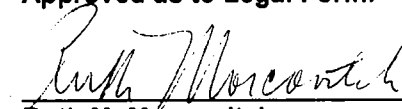
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