

**RECONSTITUTE WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER HIGH SCHOOL AND REMOVE AND REPLACE THE
HARPER STAFF, INCLUDING THE PRINCIPAL,
AT THE END OF THE 2007-2008 SCHOOL YEAR**

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:

That the Board of Education of the City of Chicago ("Board") approve the reconstitution of William Rainey Harper High School ("Harper School"), Unit 1360, located at 6520 South Wood Street, Chicago, Illinois and remove and replace its staff, including the principal, at the end of the 2007-2008 school year.

DESCRIPTION:

Statutory Authority. Pursuant to Section 5/34-8.3(d) of the Illinois School Code, 105 ILCS 5/34-8.3(d), and following the opportunity for a public hearing, the Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools ("CEO") may recommend to the Board the reconstitution of a school on probation for at least one year for academic reasons, and the replacement and reassignment of its entire staff, including the principal.

Procedural History: Public Notice, Public Hearings, and the Hearing Officer's Report and Recommendation. On January 24, 2008, the CEO gave written notice of his proposal to turn around Harper School by reconstituting the school in accordance with Section 5/34-8.3(d) of the Illinois School Code to:

- (a) the parents of students enrolled at Harper School;
- (b) the principal of Harper School;
- (c) the assistant principal(s) of Harper School;
- (d) the teachers and staff of Harper School; and,
- (e) the Local School Council members of Harper School.

Beginning January 28, 2008, the CEO's designee published a notice of a public hearing regarding his proposal to reconstitute Harper School. The public hearing was scheduled for February 11, 2008 at 7:00 pm. at 125 South Clark Street, 5th Floor, Board Chambers, Chicago, Illinois.

On February 11, 2008, the CEO, through his appointed Hearing Officer, Michael Hernandez, Esq., convened the public hearing to receive public comment on his proposal to reconstitute Harper High School. Oral and written comments were received from those members of the public who wished to comment. The record of the public hearing was left open until Wednesday, February 13, 2008 at 5:00 p.m., to receive any additional comments that members of the public wished to submit in writing to the hearing officer.

On February 19, 2008, Hearing Officer Hernandez issued a report and recommendation to the CEO in which Hearing Officer Hernandez recommended that the CEO proceed with his proposal to reconstitute Harper School.

On February 27, 2008, members of the public were afforded an opportunity to provide public comment to members of the Board at the Board's regular February 27, 2008 meeting, which was held pursuant to a published notice.

Basis for CEO's Recommendation. On December 19, 2007, the CEO published proposed criteria to turn around schools, through reconstitution and other means, which have seen persistent academic failure. The CEO is proposing to turn around, through reconstitutions and other legal means, clusters of elementary and related high schools, so that graduating elementary school students are academically prepared to attend high school and receive a rigorous education in high school. Harper School was selected for turn around through reconstitution because of (A) its probation history, (B) it meets the final

turn-around criteria adopted by the CEO, (C) it is part of a cluster of schools proposed for turn around, including the Copernicus and Fulton elementary schools, whose graduates may attend Harper School and (D) reconstitution is in the best interests of the present students of Harper School as detailed below.

A. Harper's Probation History. Harper High School has been on probation for twelve years. During that time, Harper has received support in the form of: a full-time reading coach; guidance on the development of the school improvement plan and alignment of the school budget to the Chicago Public Schools' priorities; and direct support from Region Education Officers and Area Instruction Officers and their support staff including Area Reading and Math Coaches and School Improvement Coordinators.

B. Harper High School Meets the Turn-Around Criteria. Harper School satisfied the school turn-around criteria for the following reasons:

1. **The school's students do not show up for school:** in the 2006-2007 school year, students at Harper missed an average of 45 days of school. From the 2005 school year to the 2007 school year, students at Harper missed an average of 47 days of school each year.
2. **The school's students do not stay:** In the 2006-2007 school year, 15% of students at Harper dropped out of school. From the 2005 school year to the 2007 school year, an average of 14% of students at Harper dropped out of school.
3. **The school's students do not succeed:** In the 2006-2007 school year, only 5% of Harper students met or exceeded state standards on the PSAE Composite. From the 2005 school year to the 2007 school year, Harper had an average PSAE Composite score of 5% of students meeting or exceeding state standards.
4. **The school's students do not compete:** In 2006, Harper had 35% of students making the expected year-to-year gains on the ACT EPAS assessment series.

C. Harper is Part of a Cluster of Related Schools Proposed for Turn Around. In addition to the CEO's proposal to turn around Harper School, the CEO is proposing to turn around the Copernicus and Fulton elementary schools, whose graduates may attend Harper. By simultaneously turning around Copernicus and Fulton elementary schools and Harper High School, the CEO believes that Harper students will be better prepared to succeed academically in high school and will receive a more rigorous high school education.

D. Reconstitution is in the Best Interests of Harper Students. Reconstitution will enable the CEO to select a principal and administrative team to develop and implement a new educational focus at Harper High School and to hire teaching and educational support staff with credentials to implement that educational focus. No current or prospective Harper student will be displaced from the school.

After reviewing the Hearing Officer's Report and Recommendation, the Chief Executive Officer has determined to recommend that the Board approve the reconstitution of Harper High School at the end of the 2007-2008 school year. The reconstitution of Harper will take effect June 30, 2008.

LSC IMPLICATIONS:

As Harper High School will remain on probation after its reconstitution, the powers and duties of the Harper Local School Council with respect to the School Improvement Plan and School Expenditure Plan will remain the same after reconstitution. As the result of the removal and replacement of the current principal pursuant to section 5/34-8.3(d) of the Illinois School Code, the Harper Local School Council will have no authority to select a new four-year contract principal until the school is removed from probation pursuant to Section VIII of the Board's School Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2007-2008 School Year, or any successor policy on school probation.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS:

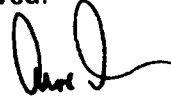
Pursuant to 105 ILSC 5/34-8.3(d)(4), all Harper employees, including the principal, will be removed and replaced in accordance with Board rules, policies and applicable collective bargaining agreements, if any.

Approved for Consideration:



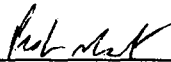
Barbara Eason-Watkins
Chief Education Officer

Approved:



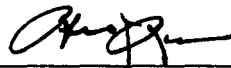
Arne Duncan
Chief Executive Officer

Within Appropriation:



Pedro Martinez
Chief Financial Officer

Approved as to Legal Form:



Patrick J. Rocks
General Counsel

