

**RECONSTITUTE MORTON CAREER ACADEMY AND REMOVE AND REPLACE THE MORTON
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 Morton Career Academy ("Morton Academy"), Unit 6800, located at 431 North Troy 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 Morton Academy by reconstituting the school in accordance with Section 5/34-8.3 (d) of the Illinois School Code to:

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

Beginning January 28, 2008, the CEO's designee published a notice of a public hearing regarding his proposal to reconstitute Morton Academy. The public hearing was scheduled for February 8, 2008, at 3:00 p.m., at 125 South Clark Street, 5th Floor, Board Chambers, Chicago, Illinois.

On February 8, 2008, the CEO, through his appointed Hearing Officer, Frederick H. Bates, Esq., convened the public hearing to receive public comment on his proposal to reconstitute Morton Academy. 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 Monday, February 11, 2008, at 5:00 p.m., to receive any additional comments that members of the public wished to submit in writing to Hearing Officer Bates.

On February 13, 2008, the CEO, through the Office of New Schools, convened a second public hearing to receive public comment on his proposal that the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) be selected by the Board to manage Morton Academy after it is reconstituted.

On February 13, 2008, Hearing Officer Bates issued a report and recommendation to the CEO in which Hearing Officer Bates recommended that the CEO proceed with his proposal to reconstitute Morton Academy.

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. Morton Academy 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 Orr Campus High Schools, which Morton Academy's graduates may attend, and (D) reconstitution is in the best interests of the present students of Morton Academy as detailed below.

A. Morton's Probation History. Morton Academy has been on probation for at least four (4) years. During that time, Morton Academy has received support in the form of: a full-time reading specialist; 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 Area Instruction Officers and their support staff including Area Reading and Math Coaches and School Improvement Coordinators.

B. Morton Academy Meets the Turn-Around Criteria. Morton Academy satisfied the school turn-around criteria for the following reasons:

1. **The school is one of the lowest performing schools in the district:** 33% of students at Morton met or exceeded ISAT composite standards in the 2006 – 2007 school year.
2. **The low performance is consistent over time:** 27% of students at Morton met or exceeded ISAT composite standards on average from 2005 through 2007.
3. **The low performance is consistent across subjects:**
 - 32% of students at Morton met or exceeded ISAT standards on average from 2005 through 2007 in Reading.
 - 24% of students at Morton met or exceeded ISAT standards on average from 2005 through 2007 in Math.
 - 21% of students at Morton met or exceeded ISAT standards on average from 2005 through 2007 in Science.
4. **The students at the school are not catching up:**
 - 43% of students at Morton made expected year-to-year increases on standardized tests from the 2005 school year to the 2006 school year in Reading.
 - 31% of students at Morton made expected year-to-year increases on standardized tests from the 2005 school year to the 2006 school year in Math.

C. Morton is Part of a Cluster of Related Schools Proposed for Turn Around. In addition to the CEO's proposal to turn around Morton Academy, the CEO is also proposing to turn around the Orr Campus High Schools, in which Morton Academy graduates may enroll. By turning around both Morton and the Orr Campus High Schools, the CEO believes that Morton Academy students will be better prepared to succeed academically in high school and will receive a more rigorous education in high school.

D. Reconstitution is in the Best Interests of Morton Academy Students. Reconstitution will enable the CEO to select a principal and administrative team to develop and implement a new educational focus at Morton Academy and to hire teaching and educational support staff with credentials to implement that educational focus. No current or prospective Morton Academy 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 Morton Academy at the end of the 2007-2008 school year. The reconstitution of Morton Academy will take effect June 30, 2008.

LSC IMPLICATIONS:

As Morton Career Academy will remain on probation after its reconstitution, the powers and duties of the Morton 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 Morton 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 Morton Academy 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:



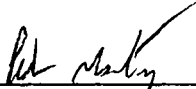
Barbara Eason-Watkins
Chief Education Officer

Approved:



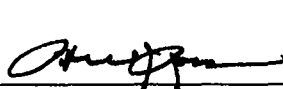
Arne Duncan
Chief Executive Officer

Within Appropriation:



Pedro Martinez
Chief Financial Officer

Approved as to Legal Form:



Patrick J. Rocks
General Counsel

