

**APPROVE THE RENEWAL OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL AGREEMENT WITH
ASPIRA CHARTER SCHOOL**

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING:

Approve the renewal of the Charter School Agreement with ASPIRA Charter School for an additional five-year period. A new Charter School Agreement applicable to this renewal term will be negotiated. The authority granted herein shall automatically rescind in the event a written Charter School Agreement is not executed by the Board and the charter school's governing board within 120 days of the date of this Board Report. The agreement authorized herein will only take effect upon certification by the Illinois State Board of Education. Information pertinent to this renewal is stated below.

CHARTER SCHOOL: ASPIRA Charter School
c/o ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois
2415 North Milwaukee Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60647
(773) 252-0970
Contact Person: Jose Rodriguez

OVERSIGHT: Office of New Schools
125 S. Clark, 5th Floor
Chicago, IL 60603
(773) 553-1530
Contact Person: Josh Edelman, Executive Officer

ORIGINAL AGREEMENT: The original Charter School Agreement (authorized by Board Report 02-0925-EX02) was for a term commencing July 1, 2003 and ending June 30, 2008 and authorized the operation of a charter school serving 450 grades 9-12. The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently amended as follows:

- Board Report 05-0126-EX13: Approved the establishment of an additional campus located at 3729 W. Leland Avenue (Haugan Middle School) to open in the Fall of 2005 and serve students in grades 6-8 and to increase the school's enrollment cap by 650, for a maximum enrollment cap of 1100 students.
- Board Report 05-0727-EX10: Approved the change in charter school name from Mirta Ramirez Computer Science Charter School to ASPIRA Charter School and approved the relocation of the Mirta Ramirez Computer Science Charter School from 4131 W. Cortland to 2435 N. Western.
- Board Report 05-1116-EX10: Approved the establishment of an additional campus located at 3121 N. Pulaski Rd. (ASPIRA – Antonia Pantoja Campus) to open in the Fall of 2007 and serve students in grades 9-12, and to increase the enrollment cap by 400, for a maximum enrollment cap of 1500 students.
- Board Report 06-1115-EX3: Approved the establishment of two additional campuses to open in the Fall of 2008 contingent upon renewal of the Charter Agreement and the Charter School's ability to meet benchmarks detailed by the Office of New Schools by November 30, 2007, and to reflect the change in the corporate address for the school operator from 2435 N. Western Avenue to 2415 N. Milwaukee Avenue.
- Board Report 07-0725-EX12: Approved a) the increase in the 2007 – 2008 maximum enrollment cap by 200 for a maximum enrollment cap of 1700 students; b) the name change for the ASPIRA – Antonia Pantoja Campus to ASPIRA – Early College

Campus; and c) the relocation of the ASPIRA – Early College Campus from 3121 N. Pulaski to 3986 W. Barry Avenue.

- Board Report 07-0822-EX11: Approved the relocation of the Mirta Ramirez Computer Science High School Campus from 2435 N. Western to 1711 N. California.

The agreement incorporates an accountability plan where the school is evaluated by the board each year based on numerous factors related to its academic, financial and operational performance.

CHARTER RENEWAL PROPOSAL: ASPIRA submitted a renewal proposal on October 5, 2007, to continue the operation of the ASPIRA Charter School under a unified mission. ASPIRA has since modified its renewal proposal to include commitments to operate the three (3) campuses through the use of uniform assessment plans and performance standards, curriculum and school calendar alignment, as well as standard governance, operational, employment, educational and admissions policies. The Board approved the withdrawal of the ASPIRA proposal to open the two (2) additional campuses upon renewal of the Charter School Agreement at the February 2008 Board Meeting as the Charter School did not timely meet several benchmarks including acquisition of sites for the new campuses. The Charter School shall serve grades 6-12 with a maximum student enrollment of 1500 students. A public hearing was held on December 4, 2007.

Campus Name	Year Opened	Address	At Capacity Grades	2008 - 2009 Enrollment	At Capacity Enrollment
Mirta Ramirez Computer Science High School Campus	2003	1711 N California	9 th – 12 th	305	450
Haugan Middle School Campus	2005	3729 W Leland Avenue	6 th – 8 th	515	650
Early College High School Campus	2007	3986 W Barry Avenue	9 th – 12 th	228	400

CHARTER EVALUATION: After receiving the charter renewal proposal, the Office of New Schools conducted a comprehensive evaluation of ASPIRA's performance and operations. This evaluation included a review of the proposal, facilities surveys, financial analysis, public hearing summary, and academic site visits of the three ASPIRA campuses in which teaching and learning, leadership and governance, and the learning communities were assessed. In addition to the foregoing, the Office of New Schools evaluated the school's student performance. From 2003-2004 to 2006-2007, ASPIRA received 5 out of 26 high ratings and 16 out of 26 middle ratings on their student absolute indicators. In 2007, 63% of ASPIRA middle school students met or exceeded state standards on the ISAT Composite and 25% of ASPIRA high school students met or exceeded state standards on the PSAE Composite. The committee recommends that, based on the schools performance on these and other accountability criteria and subject to inclusion in the Charter School Agreement of additional terms and conditions which were communicated to the Charter School on approximately January 18, 2008, that ASPIRA be authorized to continue operating as a charter school.

RENEWAL TERM: The term of ASPIRA's charter status is being extended for a five (5) year term commencing July 1, 2008 and ending June 30, 2013.

AUTHORIZATION: Authorize the General Counsel to include relevant terms and conditions, including any indemnities to be provided to the charter school, in the written Charter School

Agreement, which shall reflect resolution of any and all outstanding issues between the Board and the governing body of the charter school including, but not limited to: site location, enrollment, funding, educational program, financial controls and practices, academic accountability and evaluations. Authorize the President and Secretary to execute the Charter School Agreement. Authorize the Executive Officer of the Office of New Schools to issue a letter notifying the Illinois State Board of Education of the action(s) approved hereunder and to submit the approved proposal and signed Charter School Agreement to the Illinois State Board of Education for certification.

LSC REVIEW: Approval of Local School Councils is not applicable to this report.

FINANCIAL: The financial implications will be addressed during the development of the 2008-2009 fiscal year budget. Since the School Code of Illinois prohibits the incurring of any liability unless an appropriation has been previously made, expenditures beyond FY08 are deemed to be contingent liabilities only, subject to appropriation in subsequent fiscal year budgets. The cost of this enrollment will be approximately \$9,134,200 in 2008-2009.

GENERAL CONDITIONS:

Inspector General - Each Party to the agreement shall acknowledge that, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-13.1, the Inspector General of the Board of Education has the authority to conduct certain investigations and that the Inspector General shall have access to all information and personnel necessary to conduct those investigations.

Conflicts - The agreement shall not be legally binding on the Board if entered into in violation of the Provisions of 105 ILCS 5/34-21.3, which restricts the employment of, or the letting of contracts to, former Board members during the one-year period following expiration or other termination of their terms of office.

Indebtedness - The Board's indebtedness Policy adopted June 26, 1996 (96-0626-PO3), as amended from time to time, shall be incorporated into and made a part of the agreement.


Ethics - The Board's Ethics Code adopted June 23, 2004 (04-0623-PO4), as amended from time to time, shall be incorporated into and made a part of the agreement

Approved:



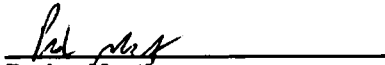
Barbara Eason-Watkins
Chief Education Officer

Respectfully Submitted:



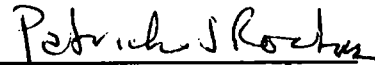
Arne Duncan
Chief Executive Officer

Within Appropriation:



Pedro Martinez
Chief Financial Officer

Approved as to Legal Form 



Patrick J. Rocks
General Counsel 