

**RECONSTITUTE MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND  
REMOVE AND REPLACE THE BETHUNE STAFF, INCLUDING THE PRINCIPAL**

**THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:**

That the Board of Education of the City of Chicago ("Board") approve the reconstitution of Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary School ("Bethune"), Unit 8020, 3030 W. Arthington, Chicago, Illinois and to remove and replace its staff, including the principal, effective June 30, 2009.

**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. The authority to reconstitute a school under Section 5/34-8.3(d) of the Illinois School Code is not contingent upon a school's NCLB restructuring status. However, pursuant to section 6316(b)(8) of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), 20 USC 6316(b)(8), schools failing to make adequate yearly progress for five consecutive years are subject to school restructuring measures. School restructuring may include significant changes in a school's staffing and governance, including reconstitution, to improve academic achievement in the school.

**Procedural History: Public Notice, Public Hearings and the Hearing Officer's Report and Recommendation.** On January 16, 2009, the CEO gave written notice of his proposal to turnaround Bethune by reconstituting the school in accordance with Section 5/34-8.3(d) of the Illinois School Code to:

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

Beginning January 19, 2009, the CEO's designee published notices of a public hearing regarding the proposal to reconstitute Bethune. The public hearing was scheduled for February 6, 2009 at 5:30 pm. at 125 South Clark Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Board Chambers, Chicago, Illinois.

On February 6, 2009, the CEO, through his appointed Hearing Officer, Michael Hernandez, Esq., convened the public hearing to receive public comment on the proposal to reconstitute Bethune. Oral and written comments were received from those members of the public who wished to comment.

On February 9, 2009, 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 provide school turnaround management services at Bethune after it is reconstituted.

On February 17, 2009, 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 Bethune.

On February 25, 2009, members of the public are afforded an opportunity to provide public comment to members of the Board at the Board's Regular February 25, 2009 meeting that is held pursuant to a published notice.

**Basis for CEO's Recommendation.** At the Board's regular meeting on December 17, 2008, the CEO announced and published proposed criteria to turnaround schools, through reconstitution and other

means, which have seen persistent academic failure. Bethune was selected for turnaround through reconstitution because of (A) its probation history, (B) it meets the final turnaround criteria adopted by the CEO, and (C) reconstitution is in the best interests of the present students of Bethune, as detailed below.

**A. Bethune's Probation History.** Bethune has been on probation for the last eight (8) years, including the current school year. During that time, Bethune has received support in the form of: a full-time literacy coach and literacy intervention teacher; support from a citywide mathematics and science 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, Math and Special Education Coaches and School Improvement Coordinators.

**B. Bethune School Meets the Turnaround Criteria.** Bethune School satisfied the school reconstitution criteria for the following reasons:

**1. The school is one of the lowest performing schools in the district:**

- 35.2% of Bethune students met or exceeded ISAT Composite standards in the 2007-2008 school year
- 0.9% of Bethune students exceeded ISAT Composite standards in the 2007-2008 school year

**2. The low performance is consistent across subjects:**

- 38.8% of Bethune students met or exceeded ISAT Reading standards in the 2007-2008 school year
- 31.6% of Bethune students met or exceeded ISAT Mathematics standards in the 2007-2008 school year
- 34.8% of Bethune students met or exceeded ISAT Science standards in the 2007-2008 school year

**3. The low performance is consistent over time:**

- 35.6% of Bethune students met or exceeded ISAT Composite standards on average from 2006 - 2008
- 1.4% of Bethune students exceeded ISAT Composite standards on average from 2006 - 2008
- 36% of Bethune students met or exceeded ISAT Reading standards on average from 2006 - 2008
- 34.1% of Bethune students met or exceeded ISAT Mathematics standards on average from 2006 - 2008
- 39% of Bethune students met or exceeded ISAT Science standards on average from 2006 - 2008

**C. Reconstitution is in the Best Interests of Bethune Students.** Reconstitution will enable the CEO to select a principal and administrative team at Bethune and hire new teaching and educational support staff. No current or prospective Bethune student will be displaced from the school. After reviewing the Hearing Officer's Report and Recommendation, the CEO has determined to proceed with recommending that the Board reconstitute Bethune effective June 30, 2009.

**LSC IMPLICATIONS:** As Bethune will remain on probation after its reconstitution, the powers and duties of the Bethune 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 Bethune 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 VII of the Board's School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2008-2009 School Year, or any successor policy on school probation.

**PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS:** Pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/34-8.3(d)(4), all Bethune 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*

Barbara Eason-Watkins  
Chief Education Officer

Within Appropriation:

*Pedro Martinez*  
Pedro Martinez  
Chief Financial Officer

Approved:

*Ron Huberman*  
Ron Huberman  
Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form:

*Patrick J. Rocks*  
Patrick J. Rocks  
General Counsel  
2-25-09