

**RECONSTITUTE JAMES WELDON JOHNSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND REMOVE AND
REPLACE THE JOHNSON STAFF, INCLUDING THE PRINCIPAL**

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:

That the Board of Education of the City of Chicago ("Board") approve the reconstitution of James Weldon Johnson Elementary School ("Johnson"), Unit 6940, 1420 S. Albany, 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 schools' 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 Johnson by closing the school in accordance with Section 5/34-8.3(d) of the Illinois School Code to:

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

Beginning January 19, 2009, the CEO's designee published notices of a public hearing regarding the proposal to close Johnson. The public hearing was scheduled for February 6, 2009 at 3:00 pm. at 125 South Clark Street, 5th Floor, Board Chambers, Chicago, Illinois.

On February 3, 2009, the CEO gave written notice of a revision to his proposal to turnaround Johnson. The CEO notified Johnson parents, principal, assistant principal(s), teachers, staff and Local School Council members that while the recommendation to turnaround Johnson was proceeding, the proposed means to turnaround Johnson would be changing from school closure to reconstitution.

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 Johnson. Oral and written comments were received from those members of the public who wished to comment.

On February 11, 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 Johnson after it is reconstituted.

On February 16, 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 Johnson.

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. Johnson 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 Johnson, as detailed below.

A. Johnson's Probation History. Johnson has been on probation for the last five (5) years, including the current school year. During that time, Johnson has received support in the form of: a full-time literacy 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 Area Instruction Officers and their support staff including Area Reading, Math and Special Education Coaches and School Improvement Coordinators.

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

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

- 40% of Johnson students met or exceeded ISAT Composite standards in the 2007-2008 school year
- 3.3% of Johnson students exceeded ISAT Composite standards in the 2007-2008 school year

2. The low performance is consistent across subjects:

- 48.1% of Johnson students met or exceeded ISAT Reading standards in the 2007-2008 school year
- 38.9% of Johnson students met or exceeded ISAT Mathematics standards in the 2007-2008 school year
- 19.2% of Johnson students met or exceeded ISAT Science standards in the 2007-2008 school year

3. The low performance is consistent over time:

- 42% of Johnson students met or exceeded ISAT Composite standards on average from 2006 - 2008
- 2.3% of Johnson students exceeded ISAT Composite standards on average from 2006 - 2008
- 43.9% of Johnson students met or exceeded ISAT Reading standards on average from 2006 - 2008
- 43.3% of Johnson students met or exceeded ISAT Mathematics standards on average from 2006 - 2008
- 32.3% of Johnson students met or exceeded ISAT Science standards on average from 2006 - 2008

C. Reconstitution is in the Best Interests of Johnson Students. Reconstitution will enable the CEO to select a principal and administrative team at Johnson and hire new teaching and educational support staff. No current or prospective Johnson 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 Johnson effective June 30, 2009.

LSC IMPLICATIONS: As Johnson will remain on probation after its reconstitution, the powers and duties of the Johnson 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 Johnson 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 ILSC 5/34-8.3(d)(4), all Johnson 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

Within Appropriation:



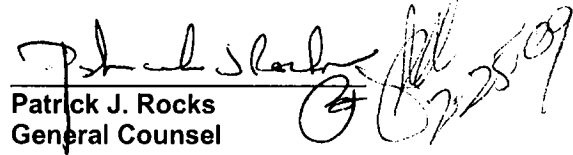
Pedro Martinez
Chief Financial Officer

Approved:



Ron Huberman
Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form:



Patrick J. Rocks
General Counsel