

March 24, 2010

**REMOVE AND REPLACE THE PRINCIPAL OF BETSY ROSS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
AND TERMINATE THE PRINCIPAL'S CONTRACT**

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:

That the principal of Betsy Ross Elementary School ("Ross"), Joy E. Pilcher, be removed and replaced pursuant to Section 34-8.3(d) of the Illinois School Code and that her contract be terminated pursuant to Section V of the Board's Uniform Principal's Performance Contract.

DESCRIPTION:

I. Legal Framework

The Illinois School Code grants the Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools ("CEO") the authority to place schools on probation to correct deficiencies in their academic performance (105 ILCS 5/34-8.3). The Illinois School Code further grants the Chicago Board of Board ("Board") the authority to establish guidelines to determine the factors for placing an attendance center on probation. 105 ILCS 5/34-8.3(b)(4).

Pursuant to that authority, the Board has in place policies under which Ross was placed on probation. The Board recently adopted the "School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2009-2010 School Year," (Board Report 09-0624-PO1) and Ross will remain on Probation in accord with the terms of that policy.

The School Code provides that when a school on probation fails to make adequate progress to correct deficiencies within one year, the CEO, with the approval of the Board and after an opportunity for a hearing, may remove and replace the school's principal. 105 ILCS 5/34-8.3(d)(1). Pursuant to Section V of the Board's Uniform Principal's Performance Contract, a principal's contract may be terminated before the expiration of its four-year term based upon the principal's removal pursuant to Section 34-8.3(d).

II. Hearing on Principal Removal

Pursuant to the "Guidelines for the Removal and Replacement of Principals of Schools on Probation for the 2009-2010 School Year" and the "Procedures Governing Principal Removal Hearings", Joy E. Pilcher, Ross's principal, and the Ross Local School Council (LSC) were duly notified that the CEO was contemplating the removal of Joy E. Pilcher as principal pursuant to Section 34-8.3(d) to further the school's educational improvement. Ms. Margaret Fitzpatrick, Esq., an independent hearing officer, presided over the Ross principal removal hearing on Tuesday, February 9, 2010, in an efficient and impartial manner.

The Law Department, representing the CEO, presented the statements of the Area 13 Chief Area Officer and the Chief Officer of Research, Evaluation and Accountability as well as documentation to support a recommendation to remove Joy E. Pilcher as Ross's principal to the hearing officer. The hearing was uncontested.

The hearing officer has submitted a written report to the CEO summarizing all relevant evidence offered during the hearing, making findings of fact, and recommending the removal of Joy E. Pilcher as the principal of Ross.

III. Chief Executive Officer's Recommendation

The CEO has reviewed the Hearing Officer's findings of fact and recommendation and hereby recommends that Joy E. Pilcher be removed and replaced as the principal of Ross effective at the end of the 2009-2010 academic school year. The CEO further recommends that Joy E. Pilcher's Uniform Principal's Performance Contract, with a term beginning July 1, 2007, and ending June 30, 2011, be terminated effective June 30, 2010. These recommendations are based upon the following factors:

- A. Ross Elementary School has a history of poor performance. Ross Elementary School has been on probation for the past 14 school years, including the 2009-2010 school year. Ms. Pilcher has served as principal at Ross since 2003.
- B. In each subject on the ISAT, the gap between Ross and the district average has remained high and has been widening. After the 2005-06 school year, when the District as a whole showed large improvements in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards, the District has continued to improve, from 61.8% on the ISAT composite in the 2005-2006 academic year to 69.8% in the 2008-2009 academic year; an increase of 8 percentage points. Over that same period of time, the scores of Ross have increased by a smaller margin, from 37.4% to 40.2%, an increase of 2.8 percentage points.
- C. In addition to standardized test scores, the CPS Performance Policy evaluates schools on attendance rate. The attendance rate for Ross has been consistently lower than the District average. In 2008-2009, the attendance rate at Ross was 90%. Since the 2001-2002 school-year, the attendance rate at Ross has not exceeded 91%, and has in some years been below 90%. Since the 2004-05 school-year, the District average for elementary schools has been consistently above 94% and was 94.5% in 2008-2009.

If the Board adopts the CEO's recommendation to remove the Ross principal, the following actions will occur:

- 1. The CEO will appoint an interim principal for Ross, based upon the recommendations of the Chief Education Officer. The interim principal will serve at the pleasure of the CEO; and
- 2. The LSC shall have no authority to select a new four-year contract principal until Ross makes sufficient academic progress to be removed from probation.

LSC REVIEW: LSC approval is not applicable to this report.

FINANCIAL: The interim principal position will be filled at a cost within current budget appropriations.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS: An Interim Principal will be selected, who will serve at the pleasure of the CEO. Until the school comes off probation, the Local School Council of Ross will have no authority to select a new four-year contract principal, until the school comes off probation as required by Board Policy.

Approved for Consideration:



Barbara Eason-Watkins
Chief Education Officer

Noted:



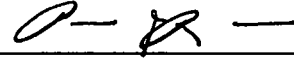
Diana Ferguson
Chief Financial Officer

Respectfully submitted:



Ron Huberman
Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form:



Patrick J. Rocks
General Counsel