

**REMOVE AND REPLACE THE PRINCIPAL OF  
JAMES R. DOOLITTLE JR. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
AND TERMINATE THE PRINCIPAL'S CONTRACT**

**THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:**

That the principal of James R. Doolittle Jr. Elementary School ("Doolittle East"), Lori Lennix, 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 Education ("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 Doolittle East was placed on probation. The Board recently adopted the "School Performance, Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2010-2011 School Year," (Board Report 10-0728-PO3) and Doolittle East 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)(2). 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 2010-2011 School Year" and the "Procedures Governing Principal Removal Hearings," Lori Lennix, Doolittle East's principal, and the Doolittle East Local School Council (LSC) were duly notified that the CEO was contemplating the removal of Lori Lennix as principal pursuant to Section 34-8.3(d) to further the school's educational improvement. Mr. Fredrick H. Bates, Esq., an independent hearing officer, presided over the Doolittle East principal removal hearing on Thursday, August 4, 2011, in an efficient and impartial manner.

The Law Department, representing the CEO, presented the statements of the Area 15 Chief Area Officer and the Manager of Performance Policy for the Chicago Public Schools as well as documentation to support a recommendation to remove Lori Lennix as Doolittle East's principal to the hearing officer. The hearing was contested.

The hearing officer has submitted a written report to the CEO summarizing all relevant evidence offered during the hearing, making findings of fact, and advised the CEO that sufficient evidence exists to support the removal of Lori Lennix as the principal of Doolittle East.

### III. Chief Executive Officer's Recommendation

The CEO has reviewed the Hearing Officer's report and hereby recommends that Lori Lennix be removed and replaced as the principal of Doolittle East effective on August 31, 2011. The CEO further recommends that Lori Lennix's Uniform Principal's Performance Contract, with a term beginning October 23, 2009, and ending October 22, 2013. These recommendations are based upon the following factors:

- A. Doolittle East has a history of poor performance. Doolittle East has been on probation for the past seven (7) consecutive school years, including the 2010-2011 school year. Ms. Lennix has served as principal at Doolittle East for the past 14 school years.
- B. Doolittle East's 2010-2011 performance on the ISAT Composite, which is the combined result of the ISAT reading, mathematics, and science assessments, was 49%, compared to a District average of 75.6%. In reading, the percentage of Doolittle East students meeting or exceeding state standards was 47.6%, compared to a District average of 72.8%. In mathematics Doolittle East's performance was 53%, compared to a District average of 79.5%. In science Doolittle East's performance was 41%, compared to a District average of 72.4%.
- C. The gap between Doolittle East and the District has been persistent over time, and in recent years has been widening. Since the 2005-2006 school year, Doolittle East's performance on the ISAT Composite increased 9.4 percentage points, from 39.6% to 49%, while the District average increased 13.8 percentage points, from 61.8% to 75.6%.
- D. The performance gap between Doolittle East and the District is consistent across subjects. In reading, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding at Doolittle East increased from 43.5% in 2005-2006 to 47.6% in 2010-2011, an increase of 4.1 percentage points. Over that same time period, the District average increased from 59.1% to 72.8%, an increase of 13.7 percentage points.
- E. Mathematics is the one subject in which Doolittle East has slightly narrowed the gap between it and the District average. Between the 2005-2006 school year and the 2010-2011 school year, Doolittle East's math score increased from 36.5% to 53%, an increase of 16.5 percentage points. Over that same time period, the District average increased from 64% to 79.5%, an increase of 15.5 percentage points.
- F. In science, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding at Doolittle East increased from 36.8% in 2005-2006 to 41% in 2010-2011, an increase of 4.2 percentage points. Over that same time period, the District average increased from 63.3% to 72.4%, an increase of 9.1 percentage points.
- G. In addition to standardized test scores, the CPS Performance Policy evaluates schools on attendance rate. The attendance rate for Doolittle East has been consistently lower than the District average. Between the 2001-2002 school year and the 2010-2011 school year, Doolittle East's attendance rate has not been above 92%, and in 2010-2011 was 91.4%. Over that time period, the District average for elementary schools has been consistently at or above 94%, and was 94.8% in 2010-2011. Doolittle East's 2010-2011 attendance rate of 91.4% was lower than all but 10% of elementary schools in the District.
- H. Doolittle East is on probation in accordance with state law and the CPS Performance Policy. The school has low performance, this performance is consistently low across subject areas, and the school is not making significant progress in catching up to the District.

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

1. The CEO will appoint an interim principal for Doolittle East, 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 Doolittle East 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.

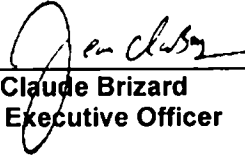
**PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS:** An Interim Principal will be selected, who will serve at the pleasure of the CEO. Until the school comes off probation, the Local School Council of Doolittle East will have no authority to select a new four-year contract principal, as required by Board Policy.

**Approved for Consideration:**



**Noemi Donoso**  
**Chief Education Officer**

**Respectfully submitted:**



**Jean-Claude Brizard**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

**Noted:**



**Melanie Shaker**  
**Acting Chief Financial Officer**

**Approved as to Legal Form:**



**Patrick J. Rocks**  
**General Counsel**

