

**APPROVE THE RENEWAL OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL AGREEMENT WITH
ASPIRA INC. OF ILLINOIS (ASPIRA CHARTER SCHOOL) AND
THE PHASE-OUT OF ITS MIRTA RAMIREZ HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS**

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING:

Approve the renewal of the Charter School Agreement with ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois for an additional five-year period and the phase-out of its Mirta Ramirez High School Campus. A new Charter School Agreement applicable to this renewal term and campus phase-out 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.

SCHOOL OPERATOR: ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois
2415 North Milwaukee Avenue
Chicago, IL 60647
Phone: 773-252-0970
Contact Person: Anibal Taboas, President & CEO

OVERSIGHT: Office of New Schools
125 S. Clark, 10th Floor
Chicago, IL 60603
(773) 553-1530
Contact Person: Carly Bolger, Executive Director

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 no more than 450 students in grades 9 through 12. The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently renewed for an additional five-year period commencing July 1, 2008 and ending June 30, 2013 (authorized by Board Report 08-0227-EX26) and authorized an increase in the maximum enrollment to 1,500 students in grades 6 -12. The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently amended as follows:

- Board Report 09-0422-EX2: Approved the correction in the at capacity enrollment of the Early College High School Campus from 400 to 600 students and the correction in the overall at capacity enrollment of the charter school from 1,500 to 1,700 students.

CHARTER RENEWAL PROPOSAL: ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois submitted a renewal proposal on September 4, 2012 to continue the operation of the ASPIRA Charter School under a unified mission, while phasing out one of its three campuses. ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois agreed to phase-out its Mirta Ramirez High School Campus. Beginning in the fall of 2013, that campus will not accept any freshmen students. Students attending the campus during the 2012-2013 school year will be allowed to continue attending through the 12th grade, with the campus closing completely by June 30, 2016.

As a result, during the renewal term the charter school shall serve grades 6 through 12 with a maximum enrollment of 1,700 students, but maximum enrollment will decrease to 1,250 students by the end of the 2015-2016 school year following the phase-out of the Mirta Ramirez High School Campus. The maximum enrollment for each ASPIRA Charter School Campus is indicated on the chart below.

This agreement will incorporate 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.

Campus Name	Year Opened	Address	At Capacity Grades	2012-2013 Enrollment	At Capacity Enrollment
Mirta Ramirez High School	2003	1711 N. California Avenue	9 th – 12 th	373	450 <i>(phased out by June 30, 2016)</i>
Haugan Middle School	2005	3729 W. Leland Avenue	6 th – 8 th	578	650
Early College High School	2007	3986 W. Barry Avenue	9 th – 12 th	511	600

CHARTER EVALUATION: After receiving the charter renewal proposal, the Office of New Schools conducted a comprehensive evaluation of ASPIRA Charter School’s performance and operations. This evaluation included a review of the proposal, facilities surveys, financial analysis, and academic site visit of the school in which student performance, teaching and learning, leadership and governance, and the learning communities were assessed. A public hearing was held on February 21, 2013 for all charter schools going through renewals to receive public comments, including ASPIRA Charter School. In addition to the foregoing, the Office of New Schools evaluated the school’s student performance. From 2007-2008 to 2011-2012, the Ramirez Campus received 8 out of 62 high ratings and 19 out of 62 middle ratings, the Haugan Campus received 24 out of 52 high ratings and 21 out of 52 middle ratings, and the Early College Campus received 5 out of 37 high ratings and 14 out of 37 middle ratings on the school absolute student indicators found in the framework put forth by the district for assessing charter school pupil performance. From 2007-2008 to 2011-2012, ASPIRA Charter School’s student attendance averaged approximately 89.8% at the Ramirez Campus, 95.3% at the Haugan Campus, and 90.8% at the Early College Campus. In 2011-2012, the percentage of students meeting/exceeding state standards on the PSAE Composite at the Ramirez Campus was 15.4%, a decrease of 10.0 percentage points from 2007-2008, and at the Early College Campus was 20.8%, an increase of 2.3% from 2009-2010. In 2011-2012, the percentage of students meeting/exceeding state standards on the ISAT Composite at the Haugan Campus was 72.0%, an increase of 11.2% from 2007-2008. The Office of New Schools recommends that, based on the school’s performance on these and other accountability criteria, ASPIRA Charter School be authorized to continue operating as a charter school but will phase-out its Mirta Ramirez High School Campus.

RENEWAL TERM: The term of ASPIRA Charter School’s charter and agreement is being extended for a five (5) year term commencing July 1, 2013 and ending June 30, 2018.

ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Additional terms and conditions will be communicated to the charter school and included as an attachment to the Charter School Agreement with ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois.

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 written Charter School Agreement. Authorize the Executive Director 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 fiscal year 2014 budget. Since the School Code of Illinois prohibits the incurring of any liability unless an appropriation has been previously made, expenditures beyond FY13 are deemed to be contingent liabilities only, subject to appropriation in subsequent fiscal year budgets.

GENERAL CONDITIONS:

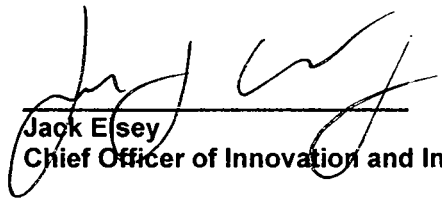
Inspector General - Each party to the agreement shall acknowledge that, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-13.1, the Inspector General of the Board of Education has the authority to conduct certain investigations and that the Inspector General shall have access to all information and personnel necessary 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 May 25, 2011 (11-0525-PO2), as amended from time to time, shall be incorporated into and made a part of the agreement.

Approved for Consideration:




Jack Eisey
Chief Officer of Innovation and Incubation

Approved:



Barbara Byrd-Bennett
Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form: 



James Bebley
General Counsel