

December 7, 2016

**REMOVE AND REPLACE THE PRINCIPAL OF  
STEPHEN F. GALE ELEMENTARY COMMUNITY ACADEMY  
AND TERMINATE THE PRINCIPAL'S CONTRACT**

**THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:**

That the principal of Stephen F. Gale Elementary Community Academy ("Gale"), Cassandra Washington, 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 Board of Education of the City of Chicago ("Board") the authority to establish guidelines to determine the factors for placing an attendance center on probation. 105 ILCS 5/34-8.3(b).

Pursuant to that authority, the Board has adopted policies under which Gale was placed on probation eight (8) years ago. The Board adopted the "School Quality Rating Policy (Begins with the 2014-2015 School Year)" (Board Report 14-1119-PO1) ("SQRP") and Gale remained on probation last year in accordance with the terms of that policy.

The Illinois 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 CEO's "Guidelines for the Removal and Replacement of Principals of Schools on Probation" and the "Procedures Governing Principal Removal Hearings," Cassandra Washington, and the Gale Local School Council (LSC) members were duly notified that the CEO was contemplating the removal of Cassandra Washington as principal pursuant to Section 34-8.3(d) to further the school's educational improvement. Margaret Fitzpatrick, Esq., an independent hearing officer, presided over the Gale principal removal hearing on October 14, 2016, in an efficient and impartial manner.

The Law Department, representing the CEO, presented the statements of the Chief of Schools for Network 2, Philip Salemi, and the Director of School Quality Measurement for the Chicago Public Schools, Ryan Crosby, as well as documentation to support a recommendation to remove Cassandra Washington as Gale'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 advised the CEO that sufficient evidence exists to support the removal of Cassandra Washington as the principal of Gale.

**III. Chief Executive Officer's Recommendation**

The CEO has reviewed the Hearing Officer's report and hereby recommends that Cassandra Washington be removed and replaced as the principal of Gale effective on December 7, 2016. The CEO further recommends that Cassandra Washington's Uniform Principal's Performance Contract, with a term beginning July 1, 2014, and ending on June 30, 2018, be terminated on December 7, 2016. These recommendations are based upon the following factors:

- A. Gale has a history of poor performance. Gale has been on probation for the past eight (8) consecutive school years. Cassandra Washington has been the principal of Gale for the past seven (7) years.
- B. Under the Board's Performance Policy (the District's accountability policy used prior to SQRP), Gale received a Level 3 rating each year between 2009-10 and 2013-14. Under the SQRP, Gale received a Level 2 rating in each of the last three years. Gale remained on probation under the CEO's discretion as its score was 2.5 or lower for three consecutive years.
- C. Gale's National School Growth Percentile has been below national average in two of the last three years in reading and math. In 2015-16 school year, Gale's National School Attainment Percentile in reading has not been above the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile in the last four years. In math, the National School Attainment Percentile has not exceeded the 17<sup>th</sup> percentile over the last four years.
- D. In addition to standardized test scores, the SQRP evaluates schools on attendance rate. The attendance rate for Gale has been consistently lower than the District average and has declined over time. Since the 2005-2006 school year, when Gale's attendance rate was 93.4% - within one percentage point of the elementary school district average - Gale's attendance rate has declined to 91.7%, while the elementary school district average has increased to 95.5%.
- E. Network 2 provided Gale with instructional leadership, professional development, and recommendations based on instruction and social-emotional learning support for students. Unfortunately, these additional supports were insufficient to raise Gale out of probationary status.
- F. Cassandra Washington waived her right to a hearing regarding her removal as Principal.

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

- 1. The CEO will appoint an interim principal for Gale. The interim principal will serve at the pleasure of the CEO;
- 2. The LSC shall have no authority to select a new four-year contract principal until Gale makes sufficient academic progress to be removed from probation; and
- 3. The Uniform Principal's Performance Contract of Cassandra Washington will be terminated effective December 7, 2016.

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

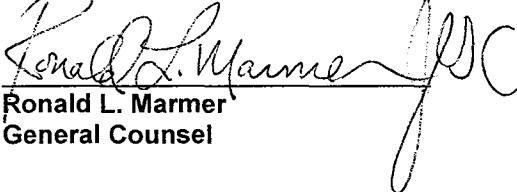
**FINANCIAL:** The interim principal position will be filled at a cost within current budget appropriations.

**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 Gale will have no authority to select a new four-year contract principal, as required by Board Policy.

**Respectfully submitted:**

  
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Forrest Claypool  
Chief Executive Officer

**Approved as to Legal Form:**

  
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Ronald L. Marmer  
General Counsel