

January 26, 2022

AUTHORIZE THE RENEWAL OF THE POLARIS SCHOOL AGREEMENT WITH CONDITIONS**THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING:**

Authorize renewal of the Polaris Charter Academy Agreement (the "Charter Academy Agreement") with conditions for an additional five-year period. A new Charter School Agreement applicable to this renewal term 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 Academy'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. The Renewal and any related contracts must be executed by the current contract's expiration date in order for First Quarter funding to be released for the new contract term. Information pertinent to this renewal is stated below.

SCHOOL OPERATOR/ Polaris Charter Academy, and IL not-for-profit corporation

CHARTER SCHOOL: 620 N. Sawyer Avenue

Chicago, IL 60624

Phone: 773-534-0820

Contact Persons: Joel Pomerenk, Board Chair and

Michelle Navarre, Principal

OVERSIGHT:

Office of Innovation and Incubation

42 West Madison Street, 3rd Floor

Chicago, Illinois 60602

Phone: 773-553-1530

Contact Person: Sean Precious, Executive Director

ORIGINAL AGREEMENT: The original Charter School Agreement (authorized by Board Report 06-1115-EX13) was for a term commencing July 1, 2007 and ending June 30, 2012 and authorized the operation of a charter school serving no more than 480 students in grades K through 8. The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2012 and ending June 30, 2017 (authorized by Board Report 12-0328-EX13). The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2017 and ending June 30, 2022 (authorized by Board Report 16-1207-EX12).

CHARTER RENEWAL PROPOSAL: Polaris Charter Academy submitted a renewal proposal on August 27, 2021 to continue the operation of Polaris Charter Academy. The charter school shall continue to be located at 620 N. Sawyer Avenue and shall continue to serve grades K through 8 with a maximum enrollment of 480 students.

The agreement will incorporate an accountability plan in which the charter school is evaluated by the Board each year based on numerous factors related to its academic, financial and operational performance.

CHARTER EVALUATION: After receiving the charter renewal proposal, the Office of Innovation and Incubation conducted a comprehensive evaluation of Polaris Charter Academy's academic performance, financial viability, and legal and contract compliance. This evaluation included a review of the proposal, academic results, financial performance, governance documents, parental issues, facilities surveys, and special education documentation. A public hearing was held on January 6, 2022 for all contract and charter schools going through renewals to receive public comments, including Polaris Charter Academy. The Office of Innovation and Incubation recommends that, based on the school's performance on these and other accountability criteria, Polaris Charter Academy be authorized to continue operating as a charter school.

RENEWAL TERM: The term of Polaris Charter Academy's charter and agreement is being extended for a five (5) year term commencing July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2027.

ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Additional terms and conditions will be communicated to the Charter Academy by the Chief Executive Officer or his designee in a formal Letter of Conditions and will be included as an attachment to the Charter Academy Agreement with Polaris Charter Academy.

AUTHORIZATION: Authorize the General Counsel to include relevant terms and conditions, including any indemnities to be provided to the Charter Academy, in the written Charter Academy Agreement and amendment. Authorize the President and Secretary to execute the written Charter Academy Agreement and amendment. Authorize the Executive Director of the Office of Innovation and Incubation 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 Academy Agreement to the Illinois State Board of Education for certification. Authorize the General Counsel to further negotiate and execute any amendments to the Charter Academy Agreement required by the Illinois State Board of Education.

LSC REVIEW: Approval of Local School Council is not applicable to this report.

FINANCIAL: The financial implications will be addressed during the development of the 2022-23 fiscal year budget. Since the School Code of Illinois prohibits the incurring of any liability unless an appropriation has been previously made, expenditures beyond FY22 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:

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Ushma Shah
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Ushma Shah
Interim Chief Portfolio Officer

Approved:

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Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form: 

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