

January 25, 2024

AUTHORIZE THE RENEWAL OF THE MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF ENGLEWOOD CHARTER AGREEMENT WITH CONDITIONS

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING:

Authorize renewal of The Montessori School of Englewood Charter Agreement (the “Charter School Agreement”) with conditions for an additional three-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 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. 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: The Montessori Network
6936 S. Hermitage Ave
Chicago, IL 60636
Phone: 773-808-1921
Contact Person: Karen Anderson, Board President

CHARTER SCHOOL: The Montessori School of Englewood Charter
6936 S. Hermitage Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60636
Phone: 773-808-1921
Contact Person: Rita Nolan, Executive Director

OVERSIGHT: Office of Innovation and Incubation
42 West Madison Street, 3rd Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60602
Phone: 773-553-1530
Contact Person: Zabrina M. Evans, Executive Director

ORIGINAL AGREEMENT: The original Charter School Agreement (authorized by Board Report 11-0223- EX72) was for a term commencing July 1, 2012, and ending June 30, 2017, and authorized the operation of a charter school serving no more than 240 students in grades K through 6. The original board report included a provision to amend the charter to add grades 7 and 8 and increase enrollment to no more than 540 students in the event the school operator identified a facility site with a larger capacity. 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-EX10). The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2024 (authorized by Board Report 22-0126-EX8).

CHARTER RENEWAL PROPOSAL: The Montessori School of Englewood Charter submitted a renewal proposal on July 28, 2023, to continue the operation of The Montessori School of Englewood Charter.

The charter school shall continue to be located at 6936 S. Hermitage Avenue and shall continue to serve grades K through 8 with a maximum enrollment of 540 students.

If The Montessori Network is authorized to operate a pre-kindergarten program in the same building as the charter school, the children enrolled in the pre-kindergarten will not be included in the charter school enrollment, and the pre-kindergarten program will not be governed by the Charter School Agreement. To the extent the Board provides funding for the pre-kindergarten program, that program will be subject to a separate agreement with and separate funding authorized by the Office of Early Childhood Education. A material breach of any contract between the Board and The Montessori Network for the operation of a prekindergarten program or the charter school may be treated as a breach of the other contract.

The agreement will incorporate an accountability plan in which the Board evaluates the charter school 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 The Montessori School of Englewood Charter'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 9, 2024, for all contract and charter schools going through renewals to receive public comments, including The Montessori School of Englewood Charter. The Office of Innovation and Incubation recommends that, based on the school's performance on these and other accountability criteria, The Montessori School of Englewood Charter be authorized to continue operating as a charter school.

RENEWAL TERM: The term of The Montessori School of Englewood Charter's charter and agreement is being extended for a three (3) year term commencing July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2027.

ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS: The following conditions shall be incorporated into the Charter Agreement between the Board of Education of the City of Chicago and The Montessori Network:

- Due to their Summative Designation, the school must participate in the Innovation & Incubation Academic Support process. This process requires schools to complete a Self-Reflection template, the District-managed Continuous Improvement Work Plan (CIWP), and participate in joint progress monitoring and Continuous Improvement activities. The Academic Support process runs annually, offering campuses the opportunity to exit based on criteria defined by Innovation and Incubation. Schools not meeting the annual exit criteria will remain in Academic Support until they meet them.
- The school must demonstrate progress toward implementing the Recommendations codified in the Special Education Renewal Site Visit Report by the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS).
- On an annual basis throughout the term, the school must meet state and federal rules governing English Learners as demonstrated by a rating of Partial or higher on formal compliance reports from the Office of Language and Cultural Education (OLCE). Chicago Public Schools has designated OLCE to conduct school visits and determine school compliance with state and federal rules regarding English Learner programs.

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 and amendment. Authorize the President and Secretary to execute the written Charter School 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 School Agreement to the Illinois State Board of Education for certification. Authorize the General Counsel to further negotiate and execute any amendments to the Charter School Agreement required by the Illinois State Board of Education.

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

FINANCIAL: The financial implications will be addressed during the development of the 2024-25 fiscal year budget. Since the School Code of Illinois prohibits the incurring of any liability unless an appropriation has been previously made, expenditures beyond FY24 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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Alfonso Carmona
Chief Portfolio Officer

Approved:

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Pedro Martinez
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Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form:

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Ruchi Verma
General Counsel