



Board of Education

Office of the Board
1 North Dearborn Street
Suite 950
Chicago, IL 60602

Board Report

25-0320-EX4

Agenda Date: 3/20/2025

AUTHORIZE RENEWAL OF THE EXCEL ACADEMY OF SOUTHWEST AGREEMENT WITH CONDITIONS

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING:

Authorize renewal of the Excel Academy of Southwest Agreement (the "Contract School Agreement") for a three (3) year period, commencing July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2028, with conditions. A new Contract School Agreement applicable to this renewal term will be negotiated. The authority granted herein shall automatically rescind in the event a written Contract School Agreement is not executed by the Board and the contract school operator within 120 days of the date of this Board Report. 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: Camelot Alt Ed-Illinois, LLC, an IL limited liability company
150 Rouse Blvd, Suite 210
Philadelphia, PA 19211
Phone: 630-559-6623
Contact: Anthony Haley, Jr., Regional Director

CONTRACT SCHOOL: Excel Academy of Southwest
7050 S. Washtenaw Ave
Chicago, IL 60629
Phone: (773) 424-0721
Contact: Jake Benke, Executive Director

OVERSIGHT: Options Network, Office of Network Support
4934 S. Wabash Ave.
Chicago, IL 60615
Phone: 773-553-3065
Contact Person: Richard Smith, Chief of Options Network

ORIGINAL AGREEMENT: The original Contract School Agreement (authorized by Board Report 14-0625-EX4) was for a term five (5) year term commencing July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2019 and authorized the operation of a contract school that is devoted to re-engaging high school dropouts and/or students at risk of dropping out of school serving no more than 375 students in grades 9 through 12. The school was designed as a contract school pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/23 -2.4b.

The contract school and Contract School Agreement were further renewed for a three (3) year term commencing July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2022 (authorized by Board Report 19-0123-EX12). The Contract school Agreement was subsequently amended as follows:

- Board Report 19-0424-EX8: Authorized the consolidation of the two locations for Excel Academy Southwest at 7014 S Washtenaw Avenue and 7050 S. Washtenaw Avenue into one location at 7050 S. Washtenaw beginning in the fall of 2019.

The contract school and Contract School Agreement were further renewed for a three (3) year term commencing July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2025 (authorized by Board Report 22-0126-EX4).

CONTRACT RENEWAL PROPOSAL: Camelot Alt Ed-Illinois, LLC submitted a renewal proposal on July 29, 2024 to continue the operation of Excel Academy of Southwest. The contract school shall continue to be located at 7050 S. Washtenaw Avenue and shall continue to serve grades 9 through 12 with a maximum enrollment of 375 students.

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

CONTRACT SCHOOL EVALUATION: After receiving the contract renewal proposal, the Options Network conducted a comprehensive evaluation of Excel Academy of Southwest's academic performance, financial viability, and legal and contract compliance. This evaluation included, but was not limited to 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 February 6, 2025 for all contract and charter schools going through renewals to receive public comments, including Excel Academy of Southwest. The Options Network recommends that, based on the school's performance on these and other accountability criteria, as well as the school's demonstration of intent to satisfy the "Additional Terms and Conditions" referred to herein below, Excel Academy of Southwest be authorized to continue operating as a contract school.

RENEWAL TERM: The term of Excel Academy of Southwest's contract school agreement is being extended for a three (3) year term commencing July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2028.

ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS: The following conditions shall be incorporated into the Contract Agreement between the Board of Education of the City of Chicago and Camelot Alt Ed-Illinois, LLC. These conditions will be communicated to Excel Academy of Southwest in a separate letter.

Continuous Improvement

- On a bi-annual basis throughout the term, the Contract School must submit a comprehensive plan to address concerns illuminated by data provided by the Options Network. The data may include but is not limited to academics, attendance, enrollment, discipline, diverse learner services, English learner services, culture and climate, teacher licensure, parent issues, and finance.

Diverse Learners

- On an annual basis throughout the term of the Agreement, the Contract School shall demonstrate compliance with the Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) expectations of timely completion of Individualized Education Programs (IEP) evaluations and Related Service Provider (RSP) service documentation as measured by OSD.

English Learners

- On a quarterly basis or more frequently throughout the term, the Contract School must meet federal, state, and local rules pertaining to English Language Learner ACCESS screening and WIDA testing participation, as reported by the Office of Multicultural and Multilingual Education (OMME).
- On an annual or more frequent basis throughout the term, the Contract School must demonstrate compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations and laws by staffing appropriately licensed bilingual specialists and ESL endorsed teachers.

Teacher Licensure

- On a bi-annual or more frequent basis throughout the term of the agreement, the Contract School must submit information for all employees and must verify the accuracy of teachers reported as licensed in the employee roster provided to the Board by validating such information with the ISBE Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS). The Contract School must notify staff in writing of deficiencies and pending licensure renewal deadlines, as needed.
- On an annual basis throughout the term of the agreement, the Contract School must demonstrate compliance with the 100% teacher licensure requirement including all positions required to meet the educational needs of diverse and English Learners

Student Discipline

- On an annual basis throughout the term of the agreement, the Contract School must properly log all discipline infractions into the Aspen System or such other student information system as may be subsequently implemented by the Board within 24 hours of the incident.

Facilities & ADA

- On an annual basis throughout the term of the Agreement, the Contract School must submit a facility deficiency repair plan and corresponding budget to communicate the status of the facility and ADA, Life Safety and Code Compliance issues for all Attendance Centers, as identified in the Facility Evaluation Reports that were provided by the CPS Architects on Record conducted in March 2022. The Contract School must make reasonable progress toward addressing the issues based on the expected costs and severity of deficiencies.

AUTHORIZATION: Authorize the General Counsel to include relevant terms and conditions, including any indemnities to be provided to the school operator, in the written Contract School Agreement. Authorize the President and Secretary to execute the written Contract School Agreement. Authorize the Chief Operations Officer to execute any ancillary documents related to food services in connection with the operation of the school.

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 2025-2026 fiscal year budget. Since the School Code of Illinois prohibits the incurring of any liability unless an appropriation has been previously made, expenditures beyond FY25 are deemed to be contingent liabilities only, subject to appropriation in subsequent fiscal year budgets.

GENERAL CONDITIONS: The agreement shall contain general conditions including but not limited to the following: Inspector General provision, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-13.1; Conflicts provision, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-21.3; Indebtedness provision, in accordance with the Board's Indebtedness Policy adopted June 26, 1996 pursuant to Board Report 96-0626-PO3; Ethics provision, in accordance with the Board's Ethics Code as amended, and a Contingent Liability provision.

Approved for Consideration:

Approved:

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Bogdana Chkoumbova

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Bogdana Chkoumbova
Chief Education Officer

Signed by:

Pedro Martinez

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Pedro Martinez
Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form:

Initial
ELS

DocuSigned by:

Ruchi Verma

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Ruchi Verma
General Counsel