



Board of Education

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

Board Report

25-0320-EX6

Agenda Date: 3/20/2025

AUTHORIZE RENEWAL OF THE YOUTH CONNECTION CHARTER SCHOOL AGREEMENT WITH CONDITIONS

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING:

Authorize renewal of the Youth Connection Charter School Agreement (the "Charter School Agreement") for a four (4) year period, commencing July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2029, with conditions. 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: Youth Connection Charter School, an IL not-for-profit corporation
10 W. 35th Street, Suite 11F4-2
Chicago, IL 60616
Phone: 312-328-0799
Contact: Alejandro Molina, Board Chair

CHARTER SCHOOL: Youth Connection Charter School, an IL not-for-profit corporation
10 W. 35th Street, Suite 11F4-2
Chicago, IL 60616
Phone: 312-328-0799
Contact: Sheila Venson, 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 Charter School Agreement (authorized by Board Report 97-0723- EX9) was for a term commencing August 1, 1997 and ending June 30, 2002, and authorized the operation of a multi-campus charter school serving high school dropouts throughout Chicago. The Charter School Agreement also limited their enrollment to no more than 1,850 students for grades 9 through 12. The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2002 and ending June 30, 2007 serving no more than 3,200 students (authorized by Board Report 02-0424-EX02). The charter and Charter School Agreement were further renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2007 and ending June 30, 2012 (authorized by Board Report 07-0627-EX7). The charter and Charter School Agreement were then renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2012 and ending June 30, 2015 serving no more than 4,004 students (authorized by Board Report 12-0328-EX14). The charter and Charter School Agreement were further renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2015 and ending June 30, 2020 serving no more than 4,217 students (authorized by Board Report 15-0527-EX24). The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently amended as follows:

- Board Report 15-0929-EX5: Ratified the voluntary suspension of educational services at the YCCS Virtual High School Campus for the 2015-2016 school year. The 191 seats that were once allocated to the YCCS Virtual High School Campus were temporarily redistributed across the following 15 campuses: Community Service West - Academy of Scholastic Achievement (20 seats), ASPIRA-Antonia Pantoja (10 seats), Association House - El Cuarto Ano (5 seats), Austin Career Education Center (10 seats), Community Services West - Community Christian Academy (10 seats), YCCS Chatham Academy (23 seats), Charles Hamilton Houston Alternative High School (10 seats), Community Youth Development Institute (10 seats), Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School (5 seats), Innovations High School of Arts Integration (15 seats), Jane Addams (5 seats), Latino Youth Alternative High School (8 seats), Olive Harvey Middle College High School (10 seats), Sullivan House Alternative High School (30 seats) and West Town Academy Alternative High School (20 seats). The charter operator had to notify the Office of Innovation and Incubation (1&1) of its intention to reinstate its educational services at YCCS Virtual High School Campus for the 2016-2017 school year by submitting a material modification that proposes a new campus location and outlines the educational and operational practices at the campus. Also ratified the approval for Charles Hamilton Houston Alternative High School Campus to remain at its current location at 7847 S. Jeffery Boulevard until the charter operator provided 1&1 with all necessary zoning and occupancy permits and health and safety approvals for that campus to relocate to a new facility at 6620 S. King Drive.
- Board Report 16-0427-EX21: Authorized (a) the change in the name of the Association House El Cuarto Ano Campus to the Association House High School Campus and (b) an extension of the suspension of the YCCS Virtual High School Campus for one additional year until the 2017-2018 school year. Also updated the location for Charles Hamilton Houston Alternative High School Campus in the board report to 6620 S. King Drive.
- Board Report 17-0828-EX9: Authorized (a) an extension of the suspension of the YCCS Virtual High School Campus for one additional year until the 2018-2019 school year, (b) the change in the name of the Charles Hamilton Houston Alternative High School Campus to the Progressive Leadership Academy Campus, (c) the change in the name of the Ada S. McKinley - Lakeside Campus to the McKinley Lakeside Leadership Academy Campus, and (d) the increase in the at capacity enrollment of the Westside Holistic Leadership Academy Campus by 200 students to 435 students, thereby increasing the overall at capacity enrollment of the charter school to 4,417 students beginning in the fall of 2017.
- Board Report 18-0425-EX6: Authorized (a) an extension of the suspension of the YCCS Virtual High School Campus for one additional year until the 2019-2020 school year and (b) the change in the name of the Westside Holistic Leadership Academy Campus to the West Campus.
- Board Report 19-0724-EX2: Authorized an extension of the suspension of the YCCS Virtual High School Campus for one additional year until the 2020-2021 school year.

The charter and Charter School Agreement were further renewed for a five (5) year term with conditions commencing July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2025, serving no more than 4,417 students (authorized by Board Report 20-0122-EX12). The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently amended as follows:

- Board Report 22-0427-EX2 authorized (a) consolidation of the Austin Career Education Center Campus and the YCCS - West Campus into one campus to be named the YCCS - West High School Campus with an at capacity enrollment of 435 students, effective July 1, 2022. Students from the original Austin Career Education Center Campus at 5352 W. Chicago Ave. will have the priority to continue enrollment at the consolidated campus which will be located at the current independent facility for the original YCCS - West Campus located at 4909 W. Division St.; and (b) consolidate the Youth Connection Leadership Academy Campus and the Jane Addams Campus into one campus to be named the Youth Connection Leadership Academy Campus with an at capacity enrollment of 210 students, effective July 1, 2022. Students from the original Youth Connection Leadership Academy Campus at 3424 S. State St. will have the priority to continue enrollment at the consolidated campus which will be located three miles away at 1814 S. Union Ave., in the site of the original Jane Addams Campus.
- Board Report 24-0425-EX2 authorized (a) relocation of the Youth Connection Leadership Academy currently located at 1814 S Union St. to a facility located at 5101 S Keeler Ave. with an at capacity enrollment of 165 students effective July 1, 2024. Students currently attending Youth Connection Leadership Academy will have the priority to continue

enrollment at any Youth Connection Charter School campus; and (b) adopt the Greater West Town Project as the management organization of the West campus

CHARTER RENEWAL PROPOSAL: Youth Connection Charter School submitted a renewal proposal on July 29, 2024 to continue the operation of Youth Connection Charter School under a unified mission. The charter school shall continue to serve students who are aged 16-21 in grades 9 through 12 with a maximum enrollment of 3,927 students at the following locations:

Campus Name	Address	At Capacity Grades	At Capacity Enrollment
ASPIRA-Antonia Pantoja	3121 N. Pulaski Ave	9-12	192
Association House High School	1116 N. Kedzie Ave, 4th Floor	9-12	155
Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School	2739 W. Division St & 2700 W. Haddon Ave	9-12	184
Community Services West - Community Christian Academy	1231 S. Pulaski Ave	9-12	241
YCCS Chatham Academy	9035 S. Langley Ave	9-12	204
Innovations High School of Arts Integration	17 N. State St	9-12	366
Latino Youth Alternative High School	2001 S. California Ave	9-12	201
McKinley Lakeside Leadership Academy	2920 S. Wabash Ave	9-12	204
Olive Harvey Middle College High School	10001 S. Woodlawn Ave	9-12	199
Progressive Leadership Academy	6320 S Dorchester Ave	9-12	151
Community Service West- Academy of Scholastic Achievement	4651 W. Madison St	9-12	237
Sullivan House Alternative High School	8164 S. South Chicago Ave.	9-12	334
Truman Middle College High School	1145 W. Wilson Ave	9-12	210
West	4909 W. Division Street	9- 12	435
West Town Academy Alternative High School	500 N. Sacramento Blvd	9-12	189
Youth Connection Leadership	5101 S Keeler Ave	9-12	165
Community Youth Development Institute	7836 S. Union St	9-12	260

The Charter School 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 Options Network conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the Youth Connection Charter School 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, special education documentation, and English learner documentation. A public hearing was held on February 6, 2025 for all contract and charter schools going through renewals to receive public comments, including Youth Connection Charter School. The Options Network recommends that Youth Connection Charter School be authorized to continue operating as a charter school based on the

school's performance on these and other accountability criteria.

RENEWAL TERM: The term of Youth Connection Charter School's charter agreement is being extended for a four (4) year term commencing July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2029.

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 Youth Connection Charter School. These conditions will be communicated to Youth Connection Charter School in a separate letter.

Continuous Improvement

- On a bi-annual basis throughout the term, the Charter 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. The plan must be reviewed and certified by the charter school Board.

Diverse Learners

- On an annual basis throughout the term of the Agreement, the Charter School shall ensure that all Attendance Centers demonstrate compliance with the Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) expectations of timely completion of 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 Charter School must ensure that all Attendance Centers 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 Charter School must ensure that all attendance centers 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 Charter School must submit information for all employees at each Attendance Center 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 Charter School must ensure that Attendance Centers notify staff in writing of deficiencies and pending licensure renewal deadlines, as needed.
- On an annual basis throughout the term of the agreement, the Charter School must ensure that all Attendance Centers demonstrate compliance with the 75% teacher licensure requirement and the alternative qualification requirements in accordance with Charter Schools Law including all positions required to meet the educational needs of diverse and English Learners.

Student Discipline

- On a quarterly basis throughout the term of the agreement, the Charter School must provide documentation of all infractions listed in groups 3 through 6 of the Student Code of Conduct that the Charter School has elected to implement for each Attendance Center.

Facilities and ADA

- On an annual basis throughout the term of the agreement, the Charter 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 dated June through September 2024. The Charter School must ensure that each Attendance Center demonstrates 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 charter school, in the written Charter School Agreement. Authorize the President and Secretary to execute the written Charter School Agreement. Authorize the Chief of the Options Network 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 as 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 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:

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Bogdana Chkoumbova

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Bogdana Chkoumbova
Chief Education Officer

Approved:

Signed by:

Pedro Martinez

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Pedro Martinez
Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form:

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Ruchi Verma

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General Counsel