



Board of Education

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

Board Report

25-0424-EX6

Agenda Date: 4/24/2025

AUTHORIZE THE RENEWAL OF THE CATALYST MARIA CHARTER SCHOOL AGREEMENT WITH CONDITIONS

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING:

Authorize renewal of the Catalyst Maria Charter School 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: Catalyst Schools, an IL not-for-profit corporation
6727 South California Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60629
Phone: 773-295-7001
Contact Persons: Larry Williams, Board Chair and Gordon Hannon, CEO

CHARTER SCHOOL: Catalyst Maria Charter School
6727 South California Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60629
Phone: 773-993-1770
Contact Person: Gordon Hannon, CEO

OVERSIGHT: Office of Innovation and Incubation
42 West Madison Street, 3rd Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60602
Phone: 773-553-1530
Contact Person: Alfonso Carmona, Chief Portfolio Officer

ORIGINAL AGREEMENT: The original Charter School Agreement (authorized by Board Report 11-1214-EX7) 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 1100 students in grades K through 12. 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-EX4). The charter and Charter School Agreement were further renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2025 (authorized by Board Report 22-0126-EX6).

CHARTER RENEWAL PROPOSAL: Catalyst Schools submitted a renewal proposal on August 27, 2024, to continue the operation of Catalyst Maria Charter School. The charter school shall continue to be located at 6727 South California and shall continue to serve grades K through 12 with a maximum enrollment of 1100 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 Catalyst Maria Charter School'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 February 4, 2025, for all charter schools going through renewal to receive public comments, including Catalyst Maria Charter School. The Office of Innovation and Incubation 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, Catalyst Maria Charter School be authorized to continue operating as a charter school.

RENEWAL TERM: The term of Catalyst Maria Charter School's charter and 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 Charter Agreement between the Board of Education of the City of Chicago and Catalyst Maria Charter School:

- The school must demonstrate progress toward implementing the Recommendations codified in the Special Education Renewal Site Visit Report by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD).
- 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 Multilingual-Multicultural Education (OMME). Chicago Public Schools has designated OMME to conduct school visits and determine school compliance with state and federal rules regarding English Learner programs.
- By July 1st, 2025, and annually throughout the term, no one person shall hold a directorship and an executive position or other position with substantial financial decision-making authority.

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 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 Local School Council is not applicable to this report.

FINANCIAL: The financial implications will be addressed during the development of the 2025-26 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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Alfonso Carmona
Chief Portfolio Officer

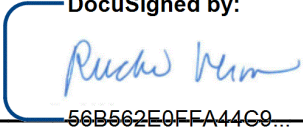
Approved:

Signed by:

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Pedro Martinez
Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form:

Initial
ELS

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Ruchi Verma
General Counsel