

May 28, 2026

AUTHORIZE RENEWAL OF THE ACERO CHARTER SCHOOLS AGREEMENT WITH CONDITIONS**THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING:**

Authorize renewal of the Acero Charter Schools Agreement (the "Charter School 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 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: Acero Charter Schools, Inc., an IL not-for-profit corporation
(f/k/a UNO Charter School Network)
18 S. Michigan Avenue, 9th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60603
Phone: 312-637-3900
Contact: Helena Stangle, Chief External Affairs Officer

CHARTER SCHOOL: Acero Charter Schools
(f/k/a UNO Charter School)
18 S. Michigan Avenue, 9th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60603
Phone: 312-637-3900
Contact: Helena Stangle, Chief External Affairs Officer

OVERSIGHT: Office of Innovation and Incubation
42 W. Madison Street, 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60602
Phone: 773-553-1530
Contact Person: Acting Chief Portfolio Officer, Conrad Timbers

ORIGINAL AGREEMENT: The original Charter School Agreement (authorized by Board Report 97-1217- EX2) was for a term commencing July 1, 1998 and ending June 30, 2003 and authorized the operation of a charter school serving no more than 800 students in grades K through 8. The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2003 and ending June 30, 2008, serving no more than 1,060 students in grades, Pre-K through 8 (authorized by Board Report 03-0225-EX7). The charter and Charter School Agreement were further renewed for a term commencing on July 1, 2008 and ending June 30, 2013, serving no more than 4,630 students (authorized by Board Report 08-0602-EX7). The charter and Charter School Agreement were then renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2013 and ending June 30, 2018, serving no more than 10,240 students in grades K through 12 (authorized by Board Report 13-0227-EX10). The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2018 and ending June 30, 2023 (authorized by Board Report 17-1206-EX6). The charter and Charter School Agreement were further renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2026 (authorized by Board Report 23-0125-EX4).

CHARTER RENEWAL PROPOSAL: Acero Charter Schools, Inc. submitted a renewal proposal on September 30, 2025 to continue the operation of Acero Charter Schools under a unified mission. On October 9, 2024, the Acero Charter Schools' Board authorized seven (7) of its fifteen campuses to

close: Octavio Paz Campus, Rufino Tamayo Campus, Bartolome de las Casas Campus, Carlos Fuentes Campus, Sandra Cisneros Campus, Esmeralda Santiago Campus, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Campus. Acero Charter Schools notified CPS officials of the closures on the same day that Acero informed their families of this decision. On November 14, 2024, and December 20, 2024, the Chicago Board of Education approved Resolutions to maintain the seven (7) campuses through the 2025-2026 school year (authorized by Board Report 24-1220-RS2). On February 27, 2025, the Board approved a Resolution amending the Board Resolution 24-1220-RS2 to maintain five (5) campuses, Cisneros, Casas, Fuentes, Tamayo, and Santiago through the 2025-2026 school year to be transitioned to District-run schools for the 2026-2027 school year (authorized by Board Report 25-0227-RS2). The performance of the seven (7) aforementioned attendance centers shall have no impact on the renewal of the Charter School Agreement expiring June 30, 2026.

The charter school shall continue to serve grades K through 12 with a maximum enrollment of 9,750 5,418 students.

Campus Name	Year Opened	Address	At Capacity Grades	Estimated At Capacity Enrollment*
Brighton Park	2013	4420 S. Fairfield Avenue	K-8	600
Sandra Cisneros	2010	2744 W. Pershing Road	K-8	630
Roberto Clemente	2012	2050 N. Natchez Avenue	K-8	630
Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz	2012	7416 N. Ridge Blvd	K-12	1262
Bartolome de las Casas	2006	1641 W. 16th Street	K-8	315
Carlos Fuentes	2006	2845 W. Barry Avenue	K-8	630
Major Hector P. Garcia MD	2008	4248 W. 47th Street	9-12	720
Jovita Idar	2011	5050 S. Homan Avenue	K-8	630
Officer Donald J. Marquez	2007	2916 W. 47th Street	K-8	630
Octavio Paz	1998	2651 W. 23rd Street	K-8	550
Esmeralda Santiago	2011	2510 W. Cortez Street	K-8	630
Victoria Soto	2013	5025 S. St. Louis Avenue	6-12	868
Rufino Tamayo	2005	5135 S. California Avenue	K-8	315
Bartolome de las Casas	2006	1641 W. 16th Street	K-8	315
PFC Omar E. Torres	2008	4248 W. 47th Street	K-8	670

SPC Daniel Zizumbo	2008	4248 W. 47th Street	K-8	670
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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 Acero Charter Schools' 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 8, 2026 for all charter schools going through renewal to receive public comments, including Acero Charter Schools. 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, Acero Charter Schools be authorized to continue operating as a charter school.

RENEWAL TERM: The term of Acero Charter Schools' charter and agreement is being extended for a five (5) year term commencing July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2031.

ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Additional terms and conditions will be communicated to the charter school by the Chief Executive Officer or his designee in a formal Letter of Conditions and will be included as an attachment to the Charter School Agreement with Acero Charter Schools, Inc.

- By July 1st, 2026, 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.
- All campuses in the network 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, all campuses within the network 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.
- On a bi-annual basis throughout the term, each applicable campus must submit a facility deficiency repair plan to communicate the status of the facility and ADA issues identified in the Facilities Assessment Reports for the campuses.


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 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 2026-2027 fiscal year budget. Since the School Code of Illinois prohibits the incurring of any liability unless an appropriation has been previously made, expenditures beyond FY26 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 Section 404.2; Ethics provision, in accordance with the Board's Ethics Code as amended, and a Contingent Liability provision.


Approved for Consideration:

Signed by:

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Conrad Timbers-Ausar
Acting Chief Portfolio Officer

Approved:

Signed by:

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Macqueline King, Ed.D
Superintendent/Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form: 

Signed by:

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Elizabeth K. Barton
General Counsel