



# Board of Education

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

## Board Report

25-0424-EX4

Agenda Date: 4/24/2025

### AUTHORIZE RENEWAL OF THE ASPIRA CHARTER SCHOOL AGREEMENT WITH CONDITIONS

#### THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING:

Authorize renewal of the ASPIRA Charter School Agreement (the "Charter School Agreement") with conditions for an additional two-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:** ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois, an IL not-for-profit corporation  
3013 N. Monticello Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60618  
Phone: 773-252-0970  
Contact: Edgar Lopez, Chief Executive Officer

**CHARTER SCHOOL:** ASPIRA Charter School  
3013 N. Monticello Avenue Chicago, Illinois  
60618  
Phone: 773-252-0970  
Contact: Edgar Lopez, Chief Executive Officer

**OVERSIGHT:** Office of Innovation and Incubation  
42 W. Madison Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Chicago, IL  
60602  
Phone: 773-553-1530  
Contact Person: Alfonso Carmona, Chief Portfolio Officer

**ORIGINAL AGREEMENT:** The original Charter School Agreement (authorized by Board Report 02-0925- EX02) was for a term commencing July 1, 2003 and ending June 30, 2008 and authorized the operation of a charter school serving no more than 450 students in grades 9 through 12. The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2008 and ending June 30, 2013, serving no more than 1,500 students in grades 6 through 12 (authorized by Board Report 08-0227- EX26). The charter and Charter School Agreement were further renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2013 and ending June 30, 2018, serving no more than 1,250 students (authorized by Board Report 13- 0227-EX5). The charter and Charter School Agreement were amended for the establishment of one new high school campus named ASPIRA Business and Finance High School Campus at 2989 N. Milwaukee Avenue to open in the fall of 2014 and serve an at capacity enrollment of 1,000 students in grades 9 through 12, thereby increasing the overall at capacity enrollment of the charter school to 2,250 students (authorized by Board Report 13-0424-EX11). The charter and Charter School Agreement were then amended for the change in the start date of the ASPIRA Business and Finance High School Campus from fall of 2014 to fall of 2015. Due to this delay, the overall at capacity enrollment at the charter school for the fall of 2014 will be 1,700 students; for fall of 2015 will be 1,950 students; and for fall of 2016 will be 2,250 students (authorized by Board Report 14-0528-EX4). The charter and Charter School Agreement were then amended for the change in the phase-out completion date for Mirta Ramirez High School Campus from June 30, 2016 to June 30, 2015. Due to the change in the phase-out year, the overall at capacity enrollment of the charter school will decrease to 1,500 students beginning in the fall of 2015 and increase to 2,250 students beginning in the fall of 2016. Also approved the disbursement of one-time incubation and startup funds for the ASPIRA Business and Finance High School Campus opening in the fall of 2015 (authorized by Board Report 15-0527-EX14). The charter and Charter School Agreement were then renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2018 and ending

June 30, 2025 (authorized by Board Report 17-1206-EX8)

**CHARTER RENEWAL PROPOSAL:** On July 31, 2024, ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois submitted a renewal proposal to continue the operation of ASPIRA Charter School under a unified mission. On December 6, 2024, ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois provided the Office of Innovation and Incubation written notice of its intent to remove the ASPIRA Haugan Middle School attendance center from its 2024-2025 charter renewal application. On January 8, 2025, the ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois Board of Directors officially voted to remove the ASPIRA Haugan campus from its 2024-2005 charter renewal application, wind down, and cease operations for this attendance center by July 1, 2025.

The remaining ASPIRA Charter School attendance centers shall continue to be located according to the chart below and shall serve grades 6 - 9 through 12 with a maximum enrollment of 2,250 1,600 students.

Campus Name	Year Opened	Address	At Capacity Grades	At Capacity Enrollment
Haugan Middle School	2005	3720 W. Leland Avenue	6 - 8	650
Early College High School	2007	3986 W. Barry Avenue	9 - 12	600
ASPIRA Business and Finance High School	2015	2989 N. Milwaukee Avenue	9 - 12	1,000

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 ASPIRA 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 ASPIRA 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, ASPIRA Charter School be authorized to continue operating as a charter school.

**RENEWAL TERM:** The term of ASPIRA Charter School's charter and agreement is being extended for a two (2) year term commencing July 1, 2025 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 ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois:

- Due to its Financial Performance outcomes, the network must participate in the Innovation & Incubation Financial Remediation process. This process requires networks to complete a Root Cause Analysis and submit monthly cash flow statements for additional oversight. If the network remains in Financial Remediation in the following year, it will also be required to submit a Financial Corrective Action Plan.
- All campuses 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 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 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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**Alfonso Carmona**  
 Chief Portfolio Officer

**Approved:**

Signed by:  
  
 AA17786A4B2446C

**Pedro Martinez**  
 Chief Executive Officer

**Approved as to Legal Form:** 

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**Ruchi Verma**  
 General Counsel