



Board of Education

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

Board Report

25-0424-EX5

Agenda Date: 4/24/2025

AUTHORIZE RENEWAL OF THE CATALYST ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL - CIRCLE ROCK AGREEMENT WITH CONDITIONS

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING:

Authorize renewal of the Catalyst Elementary Charter School - Circle Rock Agreement (the "Charter School Agreement") with conditions for an additional four-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 Illinois not-for-profit corporation
5608 West Washington Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60644
Phone: 773-295-7001
Contact: Gordon Hannon, Chief Executive Officer

CHARTER SCHOOL: Catalyst Elementary Charter School - Circle Rock
5608 West Washington Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60644
Phone: 773-945-5025
Contact: Elizabeth Jamison-Dunn, Principal

OVERSIGHT: Office of Innovation and Incubation
42 W. Madison, 3rd 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 09-1123-EX12) was for a term commencing July 1, 2010 and ending June 30, 2015 and authorized the operation of a charter school serving no more than 500 students in grades K through 8. The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2015 and ending June 30, 2020 serving no more than 520 students (authorized by Board Report 15-0527-EX3). The charter and Charter School Agreement were further renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2025 (authorized by Board Report 20-0122-EX3).

CHARTER RENEWAL PROPOSAL: Catalyst Schools submitted a renewal proposal on August 27, 2024, to continue the operation of Catalyst Elementary Charter School - Circle Rock ("Catalyst-Circle Rock"). The charter school shall continue to be located at 5608 W. Washington Boulevard and shall continue to serve grades K through 8 with a maximum enrollment of 520 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-Circle Rock'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-Circle Rock. 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-Circle Rock be authorized to continue operating as a charter school.

RENEWAL TERM: The term of Catalyst-Circle Rock's charter and 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 Catalyst Elementary Charter School - Circle Rock:

- 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).
- 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.

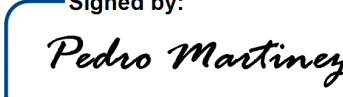
GENERAL CONDITIONS: The agreement shall contain general conditions including but not limited to the following: Inspector General provision, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-13.1; Conflicts provision, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-21.3; Indebtedness provision, in accordance with the Board's Indebtedness 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:

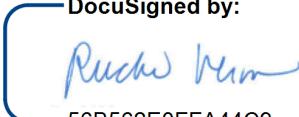
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Alfonso Carmona
Chief Portfolio Officer

Approved:

Signed by:

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Pedro Martinez
Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form: 

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Ruchi Verma
General Counsel