

October 30, 2025

AMEND BOARD REPORT 25-0424-EX7
**AUTHORIZE RENEWAL OF THE EPIC ACADEMY CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL AGREEMENT
WITH CONDITIONS**

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING:

Authorize renewal of the EPIC Academy Charter High 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.

This October 2025 amendment is necessary to authorize the termination of the existing Charter Agreement with EPIC Academy Charter High School at the end of the 2025-2026 school year by mutual consent of the parties and to provide additional funding in FY26 to ensure the successful operation and completion of the 2025-2026 school year. EPIC Academy Charter High School notified the Office of Innovation and Incubation in August 2025 of its intent to close its charter school at the end of the 2025-2026 school year. EPIC Academy Charter High School shall wind down and cease operations of its charter school and voluntarily return its charter to the Board effective July 1, 2026.

SCHOOL OPERATOR: EPIC Academy, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation
8255 S. Houston Avenue
Chicago, Illinois, 60617
Phone: 773-535-7930
Contact: LeeAndra Khan, Executive Director

CHARTER SCHOOL: EPIC Academy Charter High School
8255 S. Houston Avenue
Chicago, Illinois, 60617
Phone: 773-535-7930
Contact Person: Dr. Kyla Mathews, Principal

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

ORIGINAL AGREEMENT: The original Charter School Agreement (authorized by Board Report 09-1123-EX13) 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 480 students in grades 9 through 12. The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2015 and ending June 30, 2018, serving no more than 600 students (authorized by Board Report 15-0527-EX4). The charter and Charter School Agreement were renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2018 and ending June 30, 2025 (authorized by Board Report 17-1206-EX11). The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently amended as follows:

- Board Report 22-0525-EX6: Approved the relocation of EPIC Academy Charter High School from the facility at 8255 S. Houston Avenue to an independent facility at the 8200 block of S. Shore Drive, beginning no earlier than fall of 2024.

CHARTER RENEWAL PROPOSAL: EPIC Academy submitted a renewal proposal on July 30, 2024 to continue the operation of EPIC Academy Charter High School ("EPIC"). The charter school shall continue to be located at 8255 S. Houston Avenue and shall continue to serve grades 9 through 12 with a maximum enrollment of 600 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.

On August 21, 2025, EPIC Academy Charter High School provided written notice of its intent to cease operations of its charter school at the end of the 2025-2026 school year. In September 2025, EPIC Academy Charter High School notified all families of the intent to cease operations of the charter school at the end of this school year.

The Office of Portfolio Management recommends terminating the Charter School Agreement with EPIC Academy Charter High School at the end of the 2025-2026 school year, by mutual consent of the parties. EPIC Academy Charter High School shall wind down and cease operations of the charter school and voluntarily return its charter to the Board, effective as of July 1, 2026.

The Chief Portfolio Officer of the Office of Portfolio Management will prepare the transition plan in consultation with EPIC students, families, and staff. The transition plan will provide opportunities to maximize stability and continuity for EPIC families and qualified staff including, but not limited to, allowing maintenance of the school community by offering enrollment to all EPIC students at a district-run school and opportunities for employment for qualified EPIC staff in open positions at such a receiving school. Additionally, the transition plan will include providing all available options to EPIC students for enrollment within district-run schools and assisting interested EPIC staff by identifying and sharing information about open positions within CPS for which they may be eligible to apply, consistent with district hiring procedures and requirements, including identifying which schools are receiving EPIC students. The Chief Portfolio Officer shall report to the Board of Education on the implementation of the transition plan and the status of EPIC student enrollment, staff retention and support activities no later than December 19, 2025.

CHARTER EVALUATION: After receiving the charter renewal proposal, the Office of Innovation and Incubation conducted a comprehensive evaluation of EPIC'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 EPIC. 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, EPIC be authorized to continue operating as a charter school.

RENEWAL TERM: The term of EPIC's charter and agreement is being extended for a two (2) year term commencing July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. As indicated in this October 2025 amended Board Report, the agreement shall be terminated at the end of the 2025-2026 school year. The charter for this school shall be returned to the Board effective as of July 1, 2025.

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 EPIC Academy Charter High School:

- On an annual basis throughout the term, the network must provide a summary of discipline practices, including staff training and multi-tiered interventions and restorative strategies implemented, and an end-of-year update on the progress and results of its discipline practices, with a demonstrated reduction in ISS and OSS.
- 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.
- On an annual or more frequent basis throughout the term, the school must ensure the accuracy of teachers reported as licensed in the Employee Roster by validating it with the ISBE Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS). The school will notify staff in writing of deficiencies and pending licensure renewal deadlines, as needed. On an annual basis throughout the term, the school must demonstrate compliance with the requirement of 75% teacher licensure.
- On an annual basis throughout the term, the school must submit additional documentation to verify the authenticity of Board member required training.
- 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. Authorize the Chief Portfolio Officer of the Office of Portfolio Management to issue a letter notifying the Illinois State Board of Education of the termination of the Charter School Agreement, return of the charter to the Board, and any other information as may be necessary due to the cessation of operations of the charter school.


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.

The authorization to wind down the campus includes allocating approximately \$1,400,000 in additional FY26 funding to EPIC Academy, ensuring the school can successfully operate and complete all required activities for the 2025-2026 academic year. To the extent possible, the district will monitor EPIC Academy's use of any additional FY26 funds provided. EPIC Academy shall be required to return to the district any unspent public funds and/or property or assets purchased with public funds, in accordance with the terms of its Charter Agreement. The district will investigate and make all reasonable efforts to ensure recovery of any such unused funds, property or assets, including, but not limited to, real estate owned by EPIC Academy.


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:

Signed by:


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Conrad Timbers-Ausar
Acting Chief Portfolio Officer


Approved:

Signed by:


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Macquiline King, Ed.D
Interim Superintendent/Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form:

Initial
EKS

Signed by:


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Elizabeth K. Barton
Acting General Counsel