



Office of Portfolio Management Office of Innovation & Incubation

SY25 Charter School Renewal Recommendations

May 29, 2025

SY24-25 Renewal Cohort

16 operators with 21 campuses serving 8,968 students

Operator Name	Community	No. of Campuses	Enrollment
Alain Locke Charter School	East Garfield Park	1	340
Asian Human Services - Passages Charter School	Edgewater	1	347
Aspira Charter Network	Avondale/Logan Sq.	2*	659
Catalyst ES Charter - Circle Rock	Austin	1	493
Catalyst Maria Charter School	Chicago Lawn	1	1,075
EPIC Academy Charter High School	South Chicago	1	237
Erie Elementary Charter School	West Town	1	394
Horizon Science Academy Southwest Chicago	Gage Park	1	701
Instituto Health Sciences Career Academy	Lower West Side	1	546
Moving Everest Charter School	Austin	1	732
North Lawndale College Prep Charter HS	North Lawndale	2	463
Perspectives Charter School Network	Chatham/Douglas	4	1,755
Providence Englewood Charter School	West Englewood	1	413
Rowe Elementary Charter	West Town	1	591
Urban Prep Academy for Young Men (Bronzeville)	Douglas	1	141
Urban Prep Academy for Young Men (Englewood)	Englewood	1	81

* The ASPIRA Board of Directors Board of Directors did not seek a charter renewal for the Haugan Middle School attendance center.

Overview of Charter/Contract Renewal Process

The school renewal process allows for a comprehensive review and evaluation of school operator's performance. In collaboration with the Chief Portfolio Officer, I&I uses the outcomes of this comprehensive review and evaluation process to form a renewal recommendation, which is then presented to the Chicago Board of Education.

The Board's final action determines what will occur for the school/campus at the end of its current term. The Chicago Board of Education will vote on these actions today at its April 2025 meeting.

Potential Recommendations

The renewal process is evidence-based, transparent, and valuable

Greater than Five (5)** Year
Renewal with Conditions

Five (5) Year*
Renewal with Conditions

Shortened Renewal Term
with Conditions

Non-Renewal

**Contract schools are not eligible to be awarded renewal terms of more than five years.*

***Charter schools that exceed performance expectations may be awarded renewal terms of more than five years.*

Revised Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation of school- or campus-specific evidence is carried out across four renewal evaluation domains, each with specific criteria and performance ratings codified within the School Renewal Rubric.



**Academic
Performance**



**Financial
Performance**



**Inclusive Programming
& Equitable Systems***



**Organizational
Compliance**

*In alignment with the district's strategic plan, CPS Senior Leadership, and Board feedback, starting in the 2022 cycle, there has been a greater focus on Students with Disabilities, English Learner students, student discipline, and state-mandated 75% teacher licensure requirement, creating a new performance domain.

Our office collaborated with previous boards to create a process that elevates these areas and evaluates them separately. Despite being a newly established performance domain, the process of reviewing these items is not.

Impact of the Revised Evaluation Process on School Performance

The revised evaluation process and the granting of shortened renewal terms has impacted school performance. Let's examine those numbers in the context of the last renewal cycle for the operators in this year's cohort:

Of the 16 operators, **seven (47%) are new to the revised evaluation process**, which places greater weight and focus on Student Discipline, English Learners, and Diverse Learners. All seven are receiving a term recommendation **shorter than the last**.

- **Six of those 7** received a "Needs Substantial Improvement" rating in the IPES domain
- Four of those seven met **none or only one** of the four **subdomains in IPES**

The remaining operators participated in the revised evaluation process when they were last renewed and have received a term recommendation **equal to or greater than** the term received during their previous cycle, as they have made the necessary adjustments to grant them their current renewal recommendation.

Charter Renewal Process At a Glance



Renewal Site Visits

Overview

- Renewal Site Visits (RSV) are aligned with CPS priorities
- Enhanced RSV model offers a comprehensive, data-informed of school performance and programming fidelity
- Emphasis is placed on advancing Inclusive Programming & Equitable Systems focus area

Key Features

- RSVs are targeted and responsive to school-specific needs, some schools may receive multiple visits
- Every school will receive a Special Education site visit to ensure alignment with district expectations and compliance with federal requirements for students with disabilities
- Findings from the Special Education and EL RSVs will directly inform the outcome of their associated performance sub-domains

Academic	Classroom observations Document review Student work samples Focus groups
Special Education	Holistic review of IEP implementation and compliance Conducted in partnership with the Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD)
Culture & Climate	Review of structures regarding Student Discipline and Restorative Practices implementation Conducted in partnership with the Office of Social and Emotional Learning (OSEL)
English Learner (if applicable)	Standard program review by the Office of Multilingual - Multicultural Education (OMME)
Facilities (if applicable)	Review of independent facility compliance with ADA, life safety, and municipal code requirements

Potential Recommendation: Five Year or Greater Term

Illinois School Code 105 ILCS 5/27A-9(a)	Criteria for ≥ 5 Year Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Starting on January 1, 2017, charter school contracts in Illinois may be renewed for up to ten yearsWhile Illinois law allows charter schools to receive renewal terms of up to ten years, Chicago Public Schools ensures that schools meet rigorous performance standards before being granted longer termsCharter Law explicitly states “A charter must meet all standards and goals for academic, organizational, and financial performance set forth by the authorizer in order to be renewed for a term in excess of 5 years but not more than 10 years”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To be eligible for a five year term, the operator must receive a rating of Meets Standards across all four performance domainsTo be eligible for a term greater than five years, the operator must achieve the highest possible rating across all four performance domains

Potential Recommendation: Shortened Renewal Term

Illinois School Code 105 ILCS 5/27A-9(a)	Criteria for Shortened Term	Impact on Current Cycle Outcomes
<p>Per IL State Law, Charter schools that fail to meet academic, organizational, or financial standards must be given a remediation timeline of up to two years before revocation</p> <p>CPS uses this statutory guidance to support targeted improvement to schools in this situation. CPS gives schools time to remediate before any closure decisions are considered</p>	<p>Schools that receive a rating of Needs Substantial Improvement in one or more key performance domains</p> <p>Purpose is to provide clear expectations, focused and targeted oversight, increased accountability, and a cycle of continuous improvement to build a path toward improved performance</p>	<p>In this year's cycle, schools with a two-year term recommendation are either in academic or financial remediation in alignment with the remediation framework identified by state law</p>

Potential Recommendation: Non-Renewal

Illinois School Code 105 ILCS 5/27A-9(c)

Per IL Charter Schools Law, a Charter School may be non-renewed for any one or combination of four reasons:

(1)

Committed a material violation of any of the conditions, standards, or procedures set forth in the charter

(2)

Failed to meet or make reasonable progress toward achievement of the content standards or pupil performance standards identified in the charter

(3)

Failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management

(4)

Violated any provision of law from which the charter school was not exempted

Any non-renewal decision is granted appellate rights to the Illinois State Board of Education. The law allows ISBE to reverse a local school board's charter school non-renewal decision if it finds that the charter school subject to closure (i) is in compliance with the Charter Schools Law and (ii) is in the best interests of the students it is designed to serve.

Board Authority

Recommendations presented today are from the Chief Portfolio Officer and district leadership, on behalf of the CEO

Board members have the authority, by majority vote, to accept, deny, or adjust the recommendations made by the CEO's designees

We appreciate the feedback from Board Members on how to improve future processes

We are committed to aligning our work with the Board's mission and vision, district priorities, National Charter Authorizing & Best Practices and the needs of CPS students, families, and school communities

2024-25
Preliminary Charter Renewal
Recommendations

Alain Locke Charter School

Recommendation: Two (2) Year Term¹

- K-8 traditional charter school in the East Garfield Park community
- Received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Commendable
- Received a rating of Needs Improvement for Students with Disabilities, but met all other subdomains in IPES
- Did not meet contractual conditions, but met all other subdomains of Organizational Compliance
- Operator has historically refused to sign an Agreement that contains the current academic accountability standards.
 - Term length is affected by the Charter Academic Accountability Policy

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Meets Standards
Financial Performance	Exceeds Standards
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Approaching Standards
Organizational Compliance	Approaching Standards

¹Alain Locke's performance would garner a four (4) year renewal term; however, provisions within the Board's Charter School Academic Accountability shift the recommendation to a two (2) year renewal term with conditions. Any charter school that has not executed a renewal agreement based on the Board's most recent renewal authorization may be renewed for no more than 2 years (302.10, section III).

Trellus – Passages Charter School (aka Asian Human Services)

Recommendation: Two (2) Year Term

- K-8 traditional charter school in the Edgewater community
- Received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Commendable
- Due to its Fiscal Year 2024 financial performance outcomes, the school is entering year 1 of Financial Remediation
- Received a rating of Needs Improvement in the Students with Disabilities and English Learners subdomains of IPES
- Did not meet contractual conditions and had legal compliance deficiencies

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Meets Standards
Financial Performance	Needs Substantial Improvement
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Needs Substantial Improvement
Organizational Compliance	Needs Substantial Improvement

ASPIRA Charter School Network

Recommendation: Two (2) Year Term

- Currently operates three (3) traditional charter school campuses¹
- All campuses within this network received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Commendable
 - ASPIRA - Business & Finance HS and ASPIRA - Early College HS received an Academic Site Visit due to proficiency rates
- Due to its Fiscal Year 2024 financial performance outcomes, the network is entering year 1 of Financial Remediation
- Received a rating of Needs Improvement in the Students with Disabilities and the English Learner subdomains of IPES
- Did not meet contractual conditions, but met all other subdomains of Organizational Compliance

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Meets Standards
Financial Performance	Needs Substantial Improvement
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Needs Substantial Improvement
Organizational Compliance	Approaching Standards

¹On January 8, 2025, the Board of Directors of ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois voted to voluntarily close the ASPIRA Haugan Middle School attendance center at the end of the 2024-2025 school year. ASPIRA Inc., and as a result, the Board of Directors will not seek a charter renewal for the Haugan Middle School attendance center. The Innovation and Incubation will remove the Haugan Middle School attendance center from the SY25 Renewal Cohort. ASPIRA's other two operating campuses, Business & Finance and Early College, will remain in the 2024-25 Renewal cohort. As ASPIRA is a multi-campus replicating charter, removing one attendance center from the application does not affect the remaining campuses.

Catalyst Circle Rock Charter School

Recommendation: Four (4) Year Term

- K-8 traditional charter school in the Austin community
- Received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Commendable
- Met all areas of IPES
- Did not meet contractual conditions, but met all other subdomains of Organizational Compliance

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Meets Standards
Financial Performance	Meets Standards
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Meets Standards
Organizational Compliance	Approaching Standards

Catalyst Maria Charter School

Recommendation: Three (3) Year Term

- K-12 traditional charter school in the Chicago Lawn community
- Received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Commendable
- The school received a rating Needs Improvement in the Students with Disabilities and the English Learners subdomains of IPES
- Did not meet contractual conditions, but met all other subdomains of Organizational Compliance

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Meets Standards
Financial Performance	Meets Standards
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Needs Substantial Improvement
Organizational Compliance	Approaching Standards

EPIC Academy Charter School

Recommendation: Two (2) Year Term

- 9-12 traditional charter school in the South Chicago community
- Received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Commendable
 - Received an Academic and Culture & Climate Renewal Site Visit due to low proficiency rates
- Received a rating of Needs Improvement in *all four* subdomains of IPES - Student Discipline, Students with Disabilities, English Learners and Teacher Licensure
 - This is the primary driver of EPIC receiving a 2 year term despite performance in the other domains
- Did not meet contractual conditions, but met all other subdomains of Organizational Compliance

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Meets Standards
Financial Performance	Meets Standards
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Needs Substantial Improvement
Organizational Compliance	Approaching Standards

Erie Elementary Charter School

Recommendation: Two (2) Year Term

- K-8 traditional charter school in the West Town community
- Received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Comprehensive
 - Due to its Summative Designation, Erie will enter I&I's Academic Support process.
- Received a rating of Needs Improvement in the Student Discipline, Students with Disabilities, and English Learners subdomains of IPES
 - Received a Culture & Climate Renewal Site Visit
- Did not meet contractual conditions and had legal compliance deficiencies

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Needs Substantial Improvement
Financial Performance	Meets Standards
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Needs Substantial Improvement
Organizational Compliance	Needs Substantial Improvement

Horizon Science Academy Southwest Charter School

Recommendation: Four (4) Year Term

- K-12 traditional charter school in the Gage Park community
- Received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Commendable
- Received a rating of Needs Improvement in Student Discipline, but met all other subdomains of IPES
 - Received a Culture & Climate Renewal Site Visit
- Met all subdomains of organizational compliance

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Meets Standards
Financial Performance	Exceeds Standards
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Approaching Standards
Organizational Compliance	Meets Standards

Instituto Health Sciences Career Academy Charter High School

Recommendation: Three (3) Year Term

- 9-12 traditional charter school in the Lower West Side community
- Received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Commendable
 - Received an Academic Site Visit due to proficiency rates
- Received a rating of Needs Improvement in the Students with Disabilities and the English Learners subdomains of IPES
- Did not meet contractual conditions, but met all other subdomains of Organizational Compliance

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Meets Standards
Financial Performance	Meets Standards
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Needs Substantial Improvement
Organizational Compliance	Approaching Standards

Moving Everest Charter School

Recommendation: Two (2) Year Term

- K-8 traditional charter school in the Austin community
- Received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Comprehensive.
 - Due to its Summative Designation, Moving Everest will enter I&I's Academic Support process.
- Received a rating of Needs Improvement in the Students with Disabilities and English Learner subdomains of IPES
- Did not meet contractual conditions, but met all other subdomains of Organizational Compliance

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Needs Substantial Improvement
Financial Performance	Meets Standards
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Needs Substantial Improvement
Organizational Compliance	Approaching Standards

North Lawndale College Preparatory Network

Recommendation: Three (3) Year Term

- Currently operates two (2) traditional charter school campuses.
- Both campuses received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Commendable
 - Both campuses received an Academic Renewal Site Visit due to proficiency rates
- Received a rating of Needs Improvement in Students with Disabilities and Teacher Licensure subdomains of IPES
- Did not meet contractual conditions, but met all other subdomains of Organizational Compliance

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Meets Standards
Financial Performance	Meets Standards
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Needs Substantial Improvement
Organizational Compliance	Approaching Standards

NLCP seeks to relocate its Collins campus into the vacant portion of the Christiana facility for the 2025-26 school year. This action is proposed to the board along with renewal, and will be reflected in the Renewal Agreement.

Perspectives Charter School Network

Recommendation: Four (4) Year Term

- Currently operates four (4) traditional charter school campuses
- All campuses within this network received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Commendable
 - All campuses received an Academic and Culture & Climate Renewal Site Visit due to proficiency rates
- Received a rating of Needs Improvement in Student Discipline, but met all other subdomains of IPES
- Had deficiencies in legal compliance, but met all other subdomains of Organizational Compliance

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Meets Standards
Financial Performance	Meets Standards
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Approaching Standards
Organizational Compliance	Approaching Standards

Providence Englewood Charter School

Recommendation: Two (2) Year Term

- K-8 traditional charter school in the West Englewood community
- Received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Targeted
 - Due to its Summative Designation, Providence Englewood will enter I&I's Academic Support process.
- Received a rating of Needs Improvement in the Student Discipline and Students with Disabilities subdomains of IPES
 - Received a Culture & Climate Renewal Site Visit
- Did not meet contractual conditions, but met all other subdomains of Organizational Compliance

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Approaching Standards
Financial Performance	Meets Standards
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Needs Substantial Improvement
Organizational Compliance	Approaching Standards

Rowe Elementary Charter School

Recommendation: Two (2) Year Term

- K-8 traditional charter school in the West Town community
- Received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Targeted.
 - Due to its Summative Designation, Rowe will enter I&I's Academic Support process.
- Received a rating of Needs Improvement in the Student Discipline, Students with Disabilities, and the English Learner subdomains of IPES
 - Received a Culture & Climate Renewal Site Visit
- Did not meet contractual conditions, and had issues in its legal compliance audit

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Approaching Standards
Financial Performance	Meets Standards
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Needs Substantial Improvement
Organizational Compliance	Needs Substantial Improvement

Urban Prep Academy for Young Men Charter School – Bronzeville

Recommendation: Two (2) Year Term

- 9-12 traditional charter school in the Bronzeville community
- Received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Commendable
 - The school received an Academic Renewal Site Visit due to proficiency
- Due to its Fiscal Year 2024 financial performance outcomes, the network is entering year 1 of Financial Remediation
- Received a rating of Needs Improvement. In the Student Discipline and Students with Disabilities subdomains of IPES
- Did not meet contractual conditions, compliance and student safety subdomains

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Meets Standards
Financial Performance	Needs Substantial Improvement
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Needs Substantial Improvement
Organizational Compliance	Needs Substantial Improvement

Urban Prep Academy for Young Men Charter School – Englewood

Recommendation: Two (2) Year Term

- 9-12 traditional charter school in the Englewood community
- Received a 2024 ISBE Summative Designation of Commendable
 - Received an Academic Site Visit due to proficiency rates
- Due to its Fiscal Year 2024 financial performance outcomes, the charter is entering year 1 of Financial Remediation
- Received a rating of Needs Improvement. Disabilities subdomains of IP/ES
- Did not meet contractual conditions, subdomains and student safety

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Meets Standards
Financial Performance	Needs Substantial Improvement
Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems	Needs Substantial Improvement
Organizational Compliance	Needs Substantial Improvement

Contractual Updates



Contract Updates

The following updates have been made to the FY25 Charter and Contract School Renewal Agreement

<p>An eighteen (18) month lead time is required to notify the District of its intent to self-close the school or an attendance center.</p>	<p>Updated Wind-Down Protocol requirements tied to family and community engagement upon closure.</p>	<p>Requirement to refund to the Board all unspent public funds forty-five (45) days prior to the termination of the Charter School or closure of the Attendance Center or campus.</p>	<p>Prohibits personnel from simultaneously having a position on the charter board and a leadership role.</p>
<p>Specific guidelines for transfers, dropouts, and removals from enrollment, including the requirement to have a receiving school identified before a student's transfer</p>	<p>Prohibition of school officials from advising, encouraging, or otherwise influencing students to transfer voluntarily due to attendance or behavior concerns.</p>	<p>Improved record-keeping to ensure the implementation of fair, effective, and safe disciplinary policies and procedures.</p>	

Contract Updates (Cont.)

The following updates have been made to the FY25 Charter and Contract School Renewal Agreement

<p>The prohibition on encouraging students to withdraw from the Charter as a substitute for the expulsion process requires the school to follow the expulsion procedures outlined in 105 ILCS 5/10-22.</p>	<p>Updated language regarding the new accountability system for Charters and technical requirements to support data validity and reporting requirements.</p>	<p>More specific language regarding reporting to, compliance with, and action steps for Title IX, OIG, and OSP investigations and reports.</p>
<p>Engagement and documentation requirements for students considered as lost or unable to locate.</p>	<p>A requirement to provide the District with real-time access to student emergency contact information.</p>	<p>Publication of Charter School Board meeting minutes within 10 days of their approval.</p>
<p>Updated language regarding the suspension of students with disabilities.</p>	<p>Updated language regarding the periodic intervals of background checks for current staff.</p>	<p>A more expansive explanation of the prohibition of monetary gifts as incentives for student recruitment.</p>



