

January 25, 2024

**AUTHORIZE THE RENEWAL OF THE NAMASTE CHARTER SCHOOL AGREEMENT WITH
CONDITIONS****THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING:**

Authorize renewal of the Namaste Charter School Agreement (the "Charter School Agreement") with conditions for an additional three-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: Namaste Charter School, Inc.
3737 S. Paulina Street
Chicago, IL 60609
Phone: 773-715-9558
Contact: Jim O'Toole, Board President

CHARTER SCHOOL: Namaste Charter School
3737 S. Paulina Street
Chicago, IL 60609
Phone: 773-715-9558
Contact: Rocio Tovar, Principal

OVERSIGHT: Office of Innovation and Incubation
42 West Madison Street, 3rd Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60602
Phone: 773-553-1530
Contact Person: Zabrina M. Evans, Executive Director

ORIGINAL AGREEMENT: The original Charter School Agreement (authorized by Board Report 03-1217-EX02) was for a term commencing July 1, 2004, and ending June 30, 2009, and authorized the operation of a charter school serving no more than 294 students in grades K through 5. The charter and Charter School Agreement were subsequently renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2009 and ending June 30, 2014 (authorized by Board Report 08-1217-EX6) and authorized an increase in the maximum enrollment to 450 students in grades K through 8. The charter and Charter School Agreement were further renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2019 (authorized by Board Report 14-0226-EX8) and authorized an increase in the maximum enrollment to 485 students. The charter and Charter School Agreement were further renewed for a term commencing July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2024 (authorized by Board Report 19-0123-EX8).

CHARTER RENEWAL PROPOSAL: Namaste Charter School submitted a renewal proposal on August 31, 2023, to continue the operation of Namaste Charter School. The charter school shall continue to be

located at 3737 S. Paulina Street and shall continue to serve grades K through 8 with a maximum enrollment of 485 students.

The agreement will incorporate an accountability plan in which the Board evaluates the charter school 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 Namaste 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 January 9, 2024, for all contract and charter schools going through renewals to receive public comments, including Namaste Charter School I. The Office of Innovation and Incubation recommends that Namaste Charter School be authorized to continue operating as a charter school based on the school's performance on these and other accountability criteria.

RENEWAL TERM: The term of Namaste Charter School's charter and agreement is being extended for a three (3) year term commencing July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2027.

ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS: The following precondition shall be required before the Board of Education of the City of Chicago enters into an agreement with Namaste Charter School, Inc.

- The school currently opts to utilize the CPS Student Code of Conduct. However, if it decides to use its own by April 3, 2024, it must be modified to explicitly state that the school principal may not assign K-2 students out-of-school suspensions.

The following conditions shall be incorporated into the Charter Agreement between the Board of Education of the City of Chicago and Namaste Charter School, Inc.

- On an annual basis throughout the term, the organization must receive a rating of "Meets Standards" or higher on the Document Timeliness indicators on the Financial and Compliance Scorecard generated by CPS.
- The school must demonstrate progress toward implementing the Recommendations codified in the Special Education Renewal Site Visit Report by the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS).
- 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 Language and Cultural Education (OLCE). Chicago Public Schools has designated OLCE 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, the school must submit a facility deficiency repair plan to communicate the status of the facility and ADA issues identified in the Facilities Assessment Report.

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 and amendment. Authorize the President and Secretary to execute the written Charter School Agreement and amendment. 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 required by the Illinois State Board of Education.

LSC REVIEW: Approval of the Local School Council is not applicable to this report.

FINANCIAL: The financial implications will be addressed during the development of the 2024-25 fiscal year budget. Since the School Code of Illinois prohibits the incurring of any liability unless an appropriation has been previously made, expenditures beyond FY24 are deemed to be contingent liabilities only, subject to appropriation in subsequent fiscal year budgets.

GENERAL CONDITIONS:


Inspector General - Each party to the agreement shall acknowledge that, in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-13.1, the Inspector General of the Board of Education has the authority to conduct certain investigations and that the Inspector General shall have access to all information and personnel necessary to conduct those investigations.

Conflicts - The agreement shall not be legally binding on the Board if entered into in violation of the Provisions of 105 ILCS 5/34-21.3, which restricts the employment of, or the letting of contracts to, former Board members during the one-year period following expiration or other termination of their terms of office.

Indebtedness - The Board's Indebtedness Policy adopted June 26, 1996 (96-0626-PO3), as amended from time to time, shall be incorporated into and made a part of the agreement.

Ethics - The Board's Ethics Code adopted May 25, 2011 (11-0525-PO2), as amended from time to time, shall be incorporated into and made a part of the agreement.

Approved for Consideration:

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Alfonso Carmona
Chief Portfolio Officer


Approved:

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Pedro Martinez
Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form:

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Ruchi Verma
General Counsel