

Options Network
Office of Network Support

Chicago Public Schools

Charter and Contract Renewals

Chicago Board of Education
Meeting Presentation
March 20, 2025



Options Network – Office of Network Support

Options Students

Options students face significant barriers to educational success and graduation. They tend to be older students who are off track, have disengaged from school or have dropped out. Options schools offer an alternative learning environment for students for which a traditional school model was not a good fit.

Options students are disproportionately students of color. They face significantly higher rates of mobility, homelessness, involvement in the justice system and victimization as compared to their traditional school counterparts.

Transition from I&I to Options Network

In SY22, the Options Network was established within the Office of Network Support (ONS)

Prior to SY23, the authorization/contract renewal of all charter, contract and ALOP schools (including Options) resided in the Office of Innovation and Incubation (I&I). The Options Network was created to provide additional support to the Options Schools who serve our district's most vulnerable student population. In turn, the responsibility of authorization/contract renewal has been transitioned to the Options Network.

Academic Accountability

Academic accountability metrics used in ISBE summative designations cannot be equitably or appropriately applied to Options Schools due to the unique school models and the student population served. Therefore, CPS has implemented the Options Accountability Policy to evaluate and more accurately reflect Options School academic performance. All Options schools, regardless of governance type are evaluated with the Options Accountability Policy.

Overview of Charter/Contract Renewal Process

The school renewal process allows for a comprehensive review and evaluation of school/campus academic, financial, inclusive programming and equitable systems, and organizational performance over the last three years. This year's Options School cohort (SY24-25) contains 4 operators with 20 campuses.

The Chicago Board of Education is slated to vote on these actions at its February 2025 meeting.

The outcomes of this comprehensive review and evaluation process inform a final recommendation that is provided to the Chicago Board of Education for consideration. The Board's final action determines what will occur for the school/campus at the end of its current term.

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



Potential Recommendations

**Five (5)* Year
Renewal**

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

**Shortened
Renewal Term
with Conditions**

Non- Renewal

** Charter schools that exceed performance expectations may be awarded renewal terms of more than five years. Contract schools are not eligible to be awarded renewal terms of more than five years.*

Renewal Process At Glance

- Kick-Off Meeting (April 2024)
 - Meeting with all operators to set expectations
- Renewal Site Visits (April-Nov 2024)
 - 20 Special Education, 20 Academic, 20 Culture & Climate, 6 English Learner
- Review of Applications and Supplemental Applications (Aug 2023)
- Ongoing Office Hours
- Charter and Contract Schools Hosted Renewal State of Schools Meeting (Sept - Oct. 2024)
- Generation of Renewal Recommendation Reports (Oct-Dec 2024)
- Charter and Contract Renewal Public Hearing (Feb 2025)
 - 304 comments provided in support of schools in the cohort

Renewal Evaluation Criteria



The Options Network objectively evaluates evidence gathered on a school/campus using the School Renewal Rubric, and provides a renewal recommendation to CPS Leadership. School/campus specific evidence is evaluated across four renewal evaluation domains.

- **Academic Performance**
- **Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems Performance (IPES)**
- **Financial Performance**
- **Organizational Performance**

Each renewal evaluation domain has specific criteria and performance ratings. The Options Network uses the identified priority areas and supportive evidence to analyze school's academic, financial, IPES and organizational performance, and assess a final rating of **Exceeds, Meets, Approaching Standards, Needs Improvement, Needs Substantial Improvement** for each of the four domains.

Academic Performance Ratings Explained

Year	Evaluation or Measurement
SY22	Options Accountability Score
SY23	Options Accountability Score
SY24	Options Accountability Score & Academic Site Visit Score
Out of 40 possible points (Average of SY22, SY23 & SY24)	

The scale of points associated with each rating is:

- based on the criteria for meeting standards established in the Options School Academic Accountability Policy,
- based on the criteria for meeting standards is set forth in the Academic Site Visit rubrics that were shared with all schools,
- proportionally divided, and
- normed across the academic performance of all Options Schools.

Rating	Needs Substantial Improvement	Needs Improvement	Approaching Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards
Academic Point Total	<22.5 points	22.5-23.49 points	23.5-24.49 points	24.5-30.5 points	>30.5 points

Financial Performance Ratings Explained

Financial Metrics
Change in Net Assets
Current Ratio
Net Asset Ratio
Cash on Hand
Loan Delinquency
Annual Audit (Financial Controls)
Out of possible 15 points (Average of SY22, SY23 & SY24)

The scale of points associated with each rating is:

- based on the criteria for exceeding, meeting and not meeting standards is established in the School Agreement
- proportionally divided, and
- normed across the financial performance of all Options Schools.

Rating	Needs Substantial Improvement	Needs Improvement	Approaching Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards
Financial Point Total	<11 points	11-11.49 points	11.5-11.99 points	12 points	>12 points



Organizational Performance Ratings Explained

Organizational Sub-Domains
Legal Compliance
Governance
Students in Temporary Living Situations
Parent Issues Review
Admission and Enrollment
Student Transportation
Student Safety
Timeliness
Conditions
Out of possible 10 points (Average of SY22, SY23 & SY24)

The scale of points associated with each rating is:

- based on the criteria for meeting compliance requirements within the organizational domain that is shared with schools on an annual basis
- proportionally divided, and
- normed across the organizational performance of all Options Schools.

Rating	Needs Substantial Improvement	Needs Improvement	Approaching Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards
Organizational Point Total	<8 points	8-8.99 points	9-9.99 points	10 points	N/A

Inclusive Programming and Equitable Systems (IPES) Performance Ratings Explained

Year	Diverse Learners	English Learners	Discipline	Teacher Licensure
SY22 & SY23	Annual Special Education Compliance: ≥95% Timeliness and Completion of IEP Evaluations	Annual English Learner Compliance: English Learner Screening and Access Testing Compliance	Annual Discipline Compliance: Below the 75th percentile for out of school suspension as compared to the 5 closest schools geographically	Annual Licensure Compliance: Contract Schools: 100% Teacher Licensure Charter Schools: ≥75% Teacher Licensure
SY24	Annual Special Education Compliance AND Special Education Site Visit	Annual English Learner Compliance OR EL Program Audit*	Annual Discipline Compliance AND Culture & Climate Site Visit	
Out of possible 35 points (Average of SY22, SY23 & SY24)				
<small>*Only schools with 20 or more English Learner students receive an EL Program Audit</small>				

The scale of points associated with each rating is:

- based on annual compliance criteria
- based on the criteria for meeting standards is set forth in the Special Education, English Learner, and Culture and Climate Site Visit rubrics,
- proportionally divided, and
- normed across the IPES performance of all Options Schools.

Rating	Needs Substantial Improvement	Needs Improvement	Approaching Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards
IPES Point Total	<23 points	23-26.99 points	27-30.99 points	31-33 points	>33 points

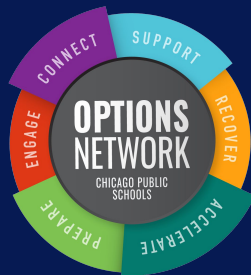
Renewal Site Visits

To increase accountability in addition to outcomes, the Options Network has launched a more robust and comprehensive Renewal Site Visit process. These visits explore how the schools implement their educational program as well as how they provide services to special populations. Findings from the visits provide a performance evaluation and qualitative guidance to schools.

All 20 school campuses in the SY25 Options School renewal cohort received each of the following site visits:

- **Academic:** Classroom Observation, Document Review, Student Work Samples, Focus Groups.
- **Special Education:** Holistic review of IEP implementation and SPED 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 Program Audit (if applicable):** Holistic review of English Learner compliance by the Office of Multicultural-Multilingual Education (OMME)
- **Facilities (if applicable):** Review of independent facility compliance with ADA, life safety, and municipal code requirements by the Office of Facilities Operations and Maintenance

2024-25 Preliminary Options Charter & Contract Renewal Recommendations



SY24-25 Options Renewal Cohort

4 operators with 20 campuses
serving 3,022 students

Operator Name	School Type	No. of Campuses	SY25 20th Day	Last Contractual Term
Youth Connection Charter School (YCCS)	Charter	17	2524	5 years
Instituto Justice & Leadership	Charter	1	96	1 year
Excel South Shore	Contract	1	216	3 years
Excel Southwest	Contract	1	186	3 years

Excel Academy of South Shore

Recommendation: Four (4) Year Term with conditions

- Options **contract** school in the South Shore community serving students 202 students ages 15 and up with the following demographics:

83.2% African American	89.6% Low Income
13.4% Latinx	11.9% Diverse Learners
3.4% Other	5.9% English Learners

- Exceeded standards in academic performance over the past three years, consistently receiving a "Good Standing" rating
- Site Visit Ratings:
 - Academic: Basic
 - Culture & Climate: Basic
 - Students with Disabilities: Not Evident
- Met or came very close to meeting the 95% or greater threshold for meeting IEP timeliness and completion requirements in each of the last 3 years.
- Consistently met annual compliance metrics for English Learners over the past three years.
- Exceeded standards in financial performance, demonstrating strong financial health and management.
- Received a rating of Well Organized on the SY24 5 Essentials survey
- Consistently proven to be a good partner, engaging in Options Network leader meetings focused on building adult leadership capacity.

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Exceeds Standards
Inclusive Programming & Equitable Systems (IPES)	Approaching Standards
Financial Performance	Exceeds Standards
Organizational Performance	Approaching Standards

Recommendation: Three (3) Year Term with conditions

- Options **contract** school in the Chicago Lawn community serving 170 students ages 15 and up with the following demographics:

56.5% African American	96.5% Low Income
41.8% Latinx	9.4% Diverse Learners
1.7% Other	20.6% English Learners

- Received an Options Accountability designation of ‘Good Standing’ in SY22, SY23 and a designation of ‘Intensive Academic Support’ in SY24
- Site Visit Ratings:
 - Academic: Basic
 - Culture & Climate: Basic
 - Students with Disabilities: Not Evident
 - Multicultural-Multilingual Learners: Minimal
- Met standards for English Learner annual compliance 2 out of 3 years (SY22 and SY23)
- Exceeded standards in financial performance, demonstrating strong financial health and management.
- Received a rating of Partially Organized on the SY24 5 Essentials survey
- Consistently proven to be a good partner, engaging in Options Network leader meetings focused on building adult leadership capacity.

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Meets Standards
Inclusive Programming & Equitable Systems (IPES)	Needs Substantial Improvement
Financial Performance	Exceeds Standards
Organizational Performance	Approaching Standards

Instituto Justice and Leadership Academy

Recommendation: Two (2) Year Term with conditions

- Options **charter** school in the Lower West Side community serving 103 students ages 16 and up with the following demographics:

99% Latinx	78.6% Low Income
1% African American	7.8% Diverse Learners
	55.3% English Learners

- Received an Options Accountability designation of 'Intensive Academic Support' over the last three years
- Site Visit Ratings:
 - Academic: Basic (improvement from the SY23 rating of Unsatisfactory)
 - Culture & Climate: Basic (improvement from the SY23 rating of Unsatisfactory)
 - Students with Disabilities: Not Evident
 - Multicultural-Multilingual Learner: Minimal
- The school has 55.4% English Learners (compared to 37.26% district-wide), many of whom are newcomer students
- While it is too early to determine whether they have met the conditions in the current contract, they have made consistent, good faith efforts to do so and are on the trajectory to meet those conditions.
- Collective bargain agreement with the CTU in SY24 resulted in higher wages for teachers
- The school has begun implementing some improvement activities, including streamlining enrollment, focusing on professional development for serving English Learners, and working to improve discipline reporting and school culture.
- Despite the difficulty of showing improvement while in a 1 year contract, the Options Network has worked closely with the school and has seen improvements in a range of areas from curriculum and instruction, culture and climate, and financial oversight.

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Needs Substantial Improvement
Inclusive Programming & Equitable Systems (IPES)	Needs Substantial Improvement
Financial Performance	Meets Standards
Organizational Performance	Needs Substantial Improvement

Recommendation: Four (4) Year Term with conditions

- Operates 17 Options **charter** school campuses predominantly on the south and west sides of the city serving 2,291 students ages 16 and up with the following demographics:

66.8% African American	97.3% Low Income
29.7% Latinx	17.2% Diverse Learners
3.5% Other	15.2% English Learners

- Schools receiving an Options Accountability designation of 'Good Standing:'
 - SY22 - 9 of 17 campuses (modified academic accountability metrics due to Covid-19)
 - SY23 - 17 of 17 campuses
 - SY24 - 15 of 17 campuses
- Site Visit Ratings:
 - Academic: 15 campuses: Basic; 2 campuses: Unsatisfactory
 - Culture & Climate: 15 campuses: Basic; 2 campuses: Unsatisfactory
 - Students with Disabilities: 9 campuses: Partially Evident; 8 campuses: Not Evident
 - Multicultural-Multilingual Learner: 4 campuses: Minimal
- Network average has met or was near the 95% or greater threshold for meeting IEP timeliness and completion requirements in each of the last 3 years
- Majority of campuses meet standards for English Learner annual compliance in the last 3 years
- Exceeded standards in financial performance, demonstrating strong financial health and management.
- Very strong community support. Many schools have been embedded in their respective communities long before they all came under the YCCS umbrella in 1997.
- Embedded within this renewal is the relocation of YCCS - Progressive Leadership Academy from 6620 S. Martin Luther King Dr. to 6320 S. Dorchester Ave. located 1.5 miles away.

Domain/Focus	Rating Based on Evidence Collected
Academic Performance	Meets Standards
Inclusive Programming & Equitable Systems (IPES)	Needs Improvement
Financial Performance	Exceeds Standards
Organizational Performance	Approaching Standards



Chicago Public Schools