

**APPROVE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE VELMA F. THOMAS EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER
AS A CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL**

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:

That the Chicago Board of Education approves the establishment of the Velma F. Thomas Early Childhood Center located at 3625 South Hoyne Avenue, Chicago, IL as a school providing services to preschool children.

DESCRIPTION:

HISTORY: In September of 2005, the Velma F. Thomas Early Childhood Center was relocated from the Price Elementary School and opened as a branch of the N. Greene Elementary School. Since that time, February 2006, the center has become a stand alone center providing preschool services exclusively. The center provides much needed preschool services to the Latino community in the McKinley Park neighborhood.

The Center has an average enrollment of 300 half day preschool children including 10 children with severe disabilities. At this time, it has been deemed in the best interest of the students to convert the Velma F. Thomas Early Childhood Center from a program to a separate school. The Center has been assigned and is currently working under the unit number 6710.

PROGRAM: The Velma F. Thomas Early Childhood Center provides services to preschool children and their families. Half day preschool programs are provided to approximately 300 children who attend one of three 2 ½ hours sessions daily. Children with special needs are included in the preschool classrooms as their IEP's allow. Children with more severe disabilities are served through an instructional classroom program. Parents are included as part of the center design as volunteers and active members of the school community. Parents take part in parent meetings, trainings, and family activities to strengthen their child's school experience.

FACILITIES: The Velma F. Thomas Early Childhood Center is located at 3625 South Hoyne Avenue, Chicago, IL in a leased facility, Saint Maurice Catholic School. The entire facility is leased for the use by the Center.

ENROLLMENT: The enrollment at the Velma F. Thomas Early Childhood Center is open city-wide to all eligible students who will reach their third birthday on or before September 1st of the school year and who reside in the City of Chicago. In addition, all applicants must take part in an eligibility screening process to determine those children who are most at risk of potential academic failure. If there are more candidates than slots available those children most at risk will be enrolled first. Once all at risk children are enrolled the remaining slots may be filled with those children showing fewer or no risk factors. The Center will serve approximately 300 students.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT: The Office of Early Childhood Education has approved payment of the lease costs and has included such costs in the annual budget for the department. All other costs associated with Velma F. Thomas Early Childhood Center have been previously approved by the Board as part of the FY'07 budget process. All these costs have been allocated in the 2006/07 CPS budget.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS: The Velma F. Thomas Early Childhood Center will be staffed in accordance with the Agreement between the Board of Education of the City of Chicago and the Chicago Teachers Union.

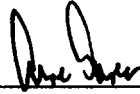
GOVERNANCE: A school governing body will be established pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/34-2.4b.

Approved for Consideration:



Barbara Eason-Watkins
Chief Education Officer

Approved:

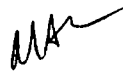


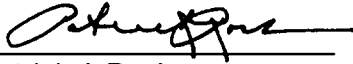
Arne Duncan
Chief Executive Officer

Within Appropriation:



John Maiorca
Chief Financial Officer

Approved as to legal form: 



Patrick J. Rocks
General Counsel