

**APPROVE THE SMALL SCHOOLS CONVERSION PLAN TO CONVERT  
JAMES H. BOWEN HIGH SCHOOL INTO FOUR SMALL SCHOOLS**

**THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:**

That the Chicago Board of Education (the "Board") approve the small schools conversion plan for the conversion of James H. Bowen High School ("Bowen") into the following four small high schools located on the Bowen campus:

1. **Chicago Discovery Academy** opened in September 2002,
2. **Bowen Environmental Studies Team (BEST)** opened in September 2002,
3. **Global Visions Academy** opened in September 2003, and
4. **The New Millennium School of Health** opened in September 2004.

**PURPOSE:**

This document details the process which began in 2002 for the conversion of Bowen into four small high schools each with its own principal, unit number, budget, teaching staff, student body and governance structure in accordance with the Board's "Small Schools Policy" (Board Report 02-0424-PO03).

**BACKGROUND:**

In December 2001, CPS issued a Request for Proposals to CPS high schools to convert to small schools. In response to this RFP, Bowen submitted a Letter of Intent to convert to small schools followed by a written conversion proposal in March 2002. In April 2002, Bowen's conversion proposal was preliminarily approved by the Office of Small Schools. On June 7, 2002, CPS conducted, in accordance with Board Policy 02-0424-PO03, a public hearing on the proposed conversion of Bowen. Additional public hearings were conducted in Spring 2004 prior to the opening of the New Millennium School of Health and on February 11, 2006 prior to the closing of Bowen in accordance with the Board's School Closing Policy 04-0225-PO02.

**TEXT:**

**I. Introduction: Student Needs and a Vision For Education**

Bowen served a high-needs population of approximately 1100 students with more than 90% coming from low-income families and 26.4% receiving Special Education services. Dropout rates were over 20%. The mobility rate of 64.5% was more than twice as high as the district average and chronic truancy has been over 20%. The racial makeup of the student population was approximately 68% African-American and 30% Hispanic.

Bowen's vision was for the four small schools to achieve higher graduation rates and improve academic achievement, as well as promote the students' readiness to enter college and to equip them with those skills needed to satisfy the existing and future employment demands. Further, graduates will have the knowledge and skills to satisfy the needs of a demanding job market. Bowen's administrators, teachers, members of the Local School Council ("LSC") felt that Bowen's vision best could be achieved through the creation of four independent, autonomous small schools, each with a distinct focus.

The following conversion plan describes the general educational goals for the four new small schools along with the specific steps taken to successfully implement the conversion of Bowen into four small high schools.

**II. General Educational Goals and Evaluation Plan for the New Small Schools**

Each of the new small schools established on the Bowen campus will significantly improve student performance in the following areas: (1) attendance (2) academic performance (3) graduation rates, and (4) the percentage of students who go on to enroll and succeed in college or other post-secondary institutions. Each small school will be subject to the same accountability and evaluation measures established by the Board for all Chicago Public Schools. Additional assessment measures may be used to study the small schools environment. The progress of each new small school will also be evaluated annually by independent evaluators retained by the Office of High School Programs and the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative to assess both the success of the conversion as well as the progress of each small school.

**III. The Bowen Conversion Plan**

**A. The Building**

The Bowen buildings and campus facilities were well designed to support conversion to a small schools arrangement. Two schools are housed in the original main Bowen Building (CDA and New Millennium) and two schools are housed in the Annex building (BEST and Global Visions). Each school has its own academic classrooms and office space.

The gymnasium, library, cafeteria, entrances, auditorium, art rooms, and some of the science labs, are shared by the four small schools. As Bowen phased out, classrooms and office spaces were re-allocated to the newly created small schools.

Some facility modifications were necessary to accommodate the four small schools including office space build-out, classroom configuration modifications and renovations related to a school's educational focus. Audits were conducted to identify the level of books, furniture, supplies and equipment existing on the Bowen campus available for use by the new small schools. The distribution of such items to the new small schools was based on a formula that estimated typical school starts-up needs. Additional items were purchased where, based on this formula, there was an insufficient amount of former Bowen materials to meet the small school's needs or where special materials related to a small school's educational focus were necessary.

The new small schools established a building sharing agreement, in accordance with the Board's Shared Facility Policy (#05-0126-PO1), which outlines the arrangements regarding the shared use areas of the Bowen campus and grounds. Building utilities, janitorial services, security and other non-segregated resources and expenses, as applicable, are shared and apportioned amongst the small schools in accordance with the building sharing agreement.

**B. The Educational Focus, Plans, and Timeline for Each of the Four New Small Schools**

Bowen transformed into four separate, independent and autonomous academies each with a distinct mission and educational focus. Each new school is established as a Small School pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/34-2.4b. A brief description of each small school's educational focus, goals and start-up timeline is provided below. Detailed descriptions are found in each small school's development plan which is available in the Office of New Schools.

**1. Chicago Discovery Academy**

**a. Educational Focus and Goals**

The vision of the Chicago Discovery Academy (CDA) is to use the city as a resource to open avenues of learning that will further each student's capacity for innovative thought. Its mission is to provide its students with quality instruction, high expectations, codes of conduct, and unlimited opportunity, and to give them the skills necessary to further their education in the profession of their choice.

- b. CDA will accomplish its educational goals by:
  - (1) providing authentic experiences from professionals and completing community research;
  - (2) providing theme-based field experiences once a month; and
  - (3) developing workshops that will meet student needs and provide social support.

c. Timeline

CDA opened in September 2002 with grades 9-12.

**2. Bowen Environmental Studies Team**

a. Educational Focus and Goals

The vision of the Bowen Environmental Studies Team (BEST) is to provide a college-prep educational setting that uses social, natural and built environments as a springboard to learning. BEST will fulfill its mission by teaching its students the skills to promote biodiversity in the natural environment and to foster multi-cultural understanding in the social environment.

b. BEST will accomplish its educational goals by:

- (1) integrating the environmental theme, demonstrated through respect for diversity in both the natural and the social setting, into all BEST classes; and
- (2) promoting a culture of collaboration and production through team environmental projects.

c. Timeline

BEST opened in September 2002 with a ninth grade. It added one grade level every year thereafter until it reached full capacity (grades 9-12) in September 2005

**3. Global Visions Academy**

a. Educational Focus and Goals

The educational focus of the Global Visions Academy (GVA) is to improve student achievement and help students become more globally aware through the use of information technology and international studies. It is the mission of GVA to create and provide a school culture and environment that promotes the social growth, intellectual achievement, college-preparation, technological advancement, and global awareness of each individual.

b. GVA will accomplish its educational goals by:

- (1) offering international studies and information technology as a major part of its curricula;
- (2) creating an atmosphere where teachers, students, parents and community feel a sense of belonging and ownership because they are included in the planning and decision making process; and
- (3) providing college/vocational institution visitations and job shadowing opportunities, as well as integrating post-secondary skills and strategies into academic courses.

c. Timeline

GVA opened in September 2003 with a ninth grade. It added one grade level every year thereafter until it reached full capacity (grades 9-12) in September 2006.

**4. New Millennium School of Health**

a. Educational Focus and Goals

The vision of the New Millennium School of Health is to offer a college-prep comprehensive educational program based on career opportunities in the health care industry. The curriculum will provide students with competencies to facilitate a smooth transition from secondary education to post-secondary experiences and life long learning.

b. NMSH will accomplish its goals by:

- (1) offering a comprehensive program that has a challenging and innovative curriculum;
- (2) providing options that lead to careers and professions in the medical and health field and work study programs in hospitals, clinics, and other medical facilities; and
- (3) promoting a school climate that encourages good attendance, enhances students achievement and emphasizes self-discipline.

c. Timeline

The New Millennium School of Health opened in September 2004 with a ninth grade class as described in Board Report 04-0526-EX5. It will continue to enlarge by one grade level every year until it reaches full capacity (grades 9-12) in September 2007.

**C. Bowen Phase Out**

In September 2003, Bowen (Unit #1240) stopped enrolling freshman. This continued for three subsequent years until the final class graduated in June 2006 and the Board authorized the school to close as described in Board Report 06-0222-EX3. During the phase out process, Bowen's resources and facilities were re-allocated to the new small schools pursuant to the building sharing agreement.

**D. Attendance Boundaries**

During the conversion process, Bowen's boundaries remained the same and students who are entitled to attend Bowen could choose to enroll in any of the new small schools on the Bowen campus. Since the closure of Bowen in June 2006, the former Bowen attendance boundaries apply to all the new Bowen campus schools. The Bowen campus attendance boundaries are subject to adjustment and change as approved by the Board.

**E. Student Recruitment and Admissions**

Each small school is responsible for recruiting its own students in a fair and cooperative manner with the other small schools resident on the Bowen campus. The four small school principals will visit each of the feeder schools in the Bowen network to market the distinctive advantages of each of the academies and recruit new students. Brochures and other informational materials will be made available to the feeder schools, parents and community members. Facilitating student recruitment is the responsibility of the Bowen Campus Manager.

When applicants outnumber student seats, the small schools will employ a lottery. Each small school shall be non-selective, enrolling students from Bowen's historic feeder schools. If enrollment from these sources does not exceed the enrollment cap, students outside the Bowen campus attendance boundaries will be accepted.

**F. Enrollment**

Each small school shall enroll approximately 600 students, with approximately 150 students per 9<sup>th</sup> grade class.

**G. Small Schools Governance**

**1. *Small Schools Advisory Councils:***

A transition Advisory Council was established at each new small school on the Bowen campus to provide appropriate oversight and support on an interim basis until such time as an appointed Local School Council was established in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-2.4b. The interim principal identified the members of the Advisory Council which was comprised of the interim principal, teachers, parents, students, curriculum area experts, partners, and community members. The Advisory Council made recommendations to the interim principal regarding school matters such as textbook selection, school improvement plan, budget, staffing, shared campus facilities, school uniforms/dress code.

**2. *Bowen LSC:***

During the conversion process, the Bowen LSC had the authority granted to it by the appropriate statutes, Board policies and rules. The Bowen LSC had the authority to advise and make recommendations to the transition Advisory Councils established at each new small school on the Bowen campus. Following the full conversion of Bowen and a Board's action to close the school in June 2006, the Bowen LSC was dissolved (Board Report 06-0222-EX3).

**3. *Small Schools Governance:***

In June 2006 the Board established an appointed Local School Council at BEST (Board Report 06-0628-RS90), Global Visions (Board Report 06-0628-RS93) and Chicago Discovery Academy (Board Report 06-0628-RS91) in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-2.4b. An appointed Local School Council is scheduled to be established at New Millennium by June 2008. These councils shall operate in accordance with the Board's policy on the governance of alternative and small schools.

**4. *Transition Committee:***

During the conversion period, all schools located on the Bowen campus participated in a transition committee that consisted of teachers, Bowen LSC members and administrators to identify issues related to the conversion of Bowen.

**5. *Small Schools Principal Appointments:***

Each new small school has its own principal and such other administrative positions as determined necessary by the Office of High School Programs in coordination with the Budget Office. The Chief Executive Officer ("CEO") appointed an interim principal for the opening of each new small school in consultation with the small schools, the Area Instruction Officer, and the Office of High School Programs. Each interim principal will serve until such time as the CEO names a replacement interim principal, or until a contract principal is appointed by the Board. Each school's transition Advisory Council established a principal selection committee to submit recommendations on principal candidates to the CEO.

**6. *Bowen School Closing:***

On February 11, 2006, the Board conducted a hearing on the closing of Bowen pursuant to the Board's policy on school closings (Board Report 04-0225-PO2). At the Board's meeting on February 22, 2006, the Board authorized the closure of Bowen effective June 30, 2006 (Board Report 06-0222-EX3). Upon Bowen's closing, the school's unit number 1240 was also closed and a new unit number was assigned to the Bowen campus for administrative purposes related to campus operations.

**H. Staffing**

To the extent possible, Bowen staff whose qualifications, expertise and educational philosophy met the requirements for the new small school were given hiring priority. During the conversion process, new staff was hired for each new small school in accordance with Board hiring policies and procedures. Detailed staffing plans are found in each small school's development plan which is available in the Office of New Schools.

Each small school was staffed with a Principal, Counselor and clerk in the first year of operation, regardless of the number of students enrolled. Each small school was also granted one Lead Teacher position in years one and two. In year three and beyond, each small school was staffed with an Assistant Principal position. Special education teachers have been assigned based on enrollment.

**I. Campus Manager and Staff**

Upon the full conversion of Bowen, a building-wide Campus Manager was hired for the Bowen campus to facilitate building sharing and to ensure that the entire facility operates smoothly. In collaboration with the small schools' principals, the Campus Manager coordinates the use of the campus facilities and grounds including their upkeep and maintenance. The Campus Manager also directs the annual facilities plan, serves as liaison to the CPS Property Advisor, supervises safety and security operations for the campus and provides support and coordination services related to campus facility operations.

The Bowen Campus Unit has staff positions necessary to the functioning, maintenance and upkeep of the Bowen campus facilities. Campus staff may include a building engineer, safety and security personnel and custodial, clerical and lunchroom staffs. Other additional campus staff such as payroll clerk, technology personnel and librarian may also be retained. All such campus personnel report to the Bowen Campus Manager. The continuation of any staff positions noted in this section including the Campus Manager is subject to available funding.

**J. Shared Campus Programs**

The four new small schools offer common extracurricular activities such as sports teams. Each school will have the option of offering school-specific teams and clubs as it deems appropriate. All joint campus teams, programs and activities will be as determined by the principals of each small school, the Campus Manager and the Area Instruction Officer.

**K. Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities will be included and welcomed in each small school in a manner which complies with all applicable laws, Board policies and consent decrees. Bowen's *Education Connection* LRE plan reflects the plan to convert into small schools and explains how the LRE funds will be divided among or shared between the small schools.

**L. External Support Partners**

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation through the Chicago High School Redesign Initiative provides support and grant funding to the four new small schools on the Bowen campus. Further, each school worked with an external partner to support the school's start up and operations. The University of Illinois at Chicago Small Schools Program served as the founding external partner for the Chicago Discovery Academy. CTU Quest served as the primary external partner for BEST and the Global Visions Academy. Millennia Consultants served as the primary external partner for the New Millennium School of Health.

**M. Community Involvement**

Forums have been held with a variety of community groups from and around the Bowen neighborhood as part of both the planning and implementation of the Bowen small schools conversion. The continued involvement of community groups will be maintained through participation in school governance councils and community outreach efforts.

Approved for Consideration:



Barbara Eason-Watkins  
Chief Education Officer

Noted:



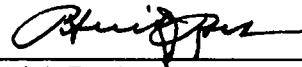
John Maiorca  
Chief Financial Officer

Respectfully Submitted:



Arne Duncan  
Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form 



Patrick Rocks  
General Counsel