

**APPROVE THE SMALL SCHOOLS CONVERSION PLAN TO CONVERT
SOUTH SHORE 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 South Shore High School ("South Shore") into the following four small high schools located on the South Shore campus:

1. **The School of the Arts** opened in September 2002,
2. **The School of Entrepreneurship** opened in September 2002,
3. **The School of Leadership** opened in September 2003, and
4. **The School of Technology** opened in September 2003.

PURPOSE:

This document details the process which began in 2002 for the conversion of South Shore 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, South Shore submitted a Letter of Intent to convert to small schools followed by a written conversion proposal in March 2002. In April 2002, South Shore'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 South Shore.

TEXT:

I. Introduction: Student Needs and a Vision For Education

South Shore served a high-needs population of approximately 1500 students with more than 95% coming from low-income families and 26.7% receiving Special Education services. Dropout rates were over 20%. The mobility rate at South Shore High School was 42% and chronic truancy was over 42%. The racial makeup of the student population of South Shore High School was approximately 99% African-American.

The South Shore vision for its small schools was to create a variety of learning environments where the teaching and learning will become more student-centered, experiential, holistic and authentic. It envisioned classrooms that were collaborative and democratic, and made learning cognitive, developmental, and challenging. South Shore administrators, teachers, members of the South Shore Local School Council ("LSC") felt South Shore'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 South Shore 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 South Shore 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 South Shore Conversion Plan

A. The Building

The South Shore buildings and campus facilities were well designed to support conversion to a small schools arrangement. Two schools are housed in the South Building (Entrepreneurship and Leadership) and two schools are housed in the North Building (Arts and Technology). Each small school has its own academic classrooms.

Each school shares a library, auditorium, gymnasium, entrance, and lunchroom. The main office is shared in each building, but each principal has his or her own office. As South Shore 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 include 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 South Shore campus available for use by the new small schools. The distribution of such items to the new small schools was based, where possible, on a formula that estimated typical school starts-up needs. Additional items were purchased where, based on this formula, there is an insufficient amount of former South Shore 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 South Shore 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

South Shore 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. The School of the Arts

a. Educational Focus and Goals

The vision of the School of the Arts is to offer its students a challenging, comprehensive college-prep education that includes arts disciplines. It aims to provide opportunities for understanding, creating, and performing arts disciplines. It will provide historical and contemporary contexts, and will concurrently pursue and equally rigorous academic program in the humanities and sciences that is supported by arts infusion.

- b. The School of the Arts will accomplish its educational goals by:
 - (1) implementing an arts infused curriculum balanced with development of specific talents;
 - (2) offering experiential and project-based learning opportunities, including internships in arts-focused settings; and
 - (3) using interdisciplinary teams of teachers to integrate learning and facilitate social, emotional, academic, and professional growth of students.

c. Timeline

The School of the Arts opened in September 2002 with grades 9 and 11. It added one grade level every year until it reached full capacity (grades 9-12) in September 2005.

2. The School of Entrepreneurship (“Entrepreneurship”)

a. Educational Focus and Goals

The vision of the School of Entrepreneurship is to create a collaborative college-prep community of learners focused on business and non-profit leadership where teachers and students connect to the broader community, achieve academic excellence, seek out learning for its own sake, develop personal responsibility and concern for others, and respect diversity.

b. The School of Entrepreneurship will accomplish its educational goals by:

- (1) providing an integrated, project-based curriculum where students learn to discover the community’s needs through academics and field-based research, and then develop projects and business plans to suit those needs;
- (2) students will serve internships with local not-for-profit and business communities each year as part of the regular academic program; and
- (3) teachers and students will work together, using reciprocal teaching and learning in which all take initiative and participate in decision making.

c. Timeline

The School of Entrepreneurship opened in September 2002 with a ninth grade and eleventh grade. It added one grade level every year until it reached full capacity (grades 9-12) in September 2005.

3. The School of Leadership

a. Educational Focus and Goals

The vision of The School of Leadership is to develop young people from within the South Shore community that they may become citizens of leadership, character, and vision for our nation. The School aims to develop academic capacity and service ethic in order to empower and motivate students to become a positive, active force in their neighborhoods, communities, and government.

b. The School of Leadership will accomplish its educational goals by:

- (1) maintaining a highly motivated and professional cadre of staff and faculty;
- (2) fostering a positive, disciplines learning environment;
- (3) providing and innovative, effective and challenging curriculum; and
- (4) establishing a program of instruction which offers students stimulating opportunities for service learning which builds teamwork, self-confidence, self-esteem, and leadership.

c. Timeline

The School of Leadership opened in September 2003 with grades 9-12.

4. ***The School of Technology***

a. Educational Focus and Goals

The School of Technology will provide a state-of-the-art technology based, college-prep, student centered, culturally grounded environment in which the students, teachers, parents, and mentors partner to constitute a small school learning community, utilizing best practice academic and service learning methods to produce a cadre of students who will be able to utilize and create with technology in every aspect of their lives.

b. The School of Technology will accomplish its goals by:

- (1) equipping classrooms with state-of-the-art computers, networked together to enhance every area of computing and communication;
- (2) shifting focus from teaching to active learning and emphasizing higher order thinking skills and complex problem solving in order to effectively use technology; and
- (3) providing technology-based professional development for staff.

c. Timeline

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

C. South Shore Phase Out

In September 2003, South Shore (Unit #1550) stopped enrolling freshman. This continued for two subsequent years until June 2005. At that time, all remaining South Shore students transferred to one the new small schools on the South Shore campus. During the phase out process, South Shore's resources and facilities were re-allocated to the growing small schools pursuant to the building sharing agreement. Currently, no students are attached to South Shore and the unit number is ready to be closed.

D. Attendance Boundaries

During the conversion process, South Shore's boundaries remained the same and students who were entitled to attend South Shore could choose to enroll in any of new small schools on the South Shore campus. Currently, the former South Shore attendance boundaries apply to all new South Shore campus schools. The South Shore 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 South Shore campus. The four small school principals will visit each of the feeder schools in the South Shore 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 South Shore Campus Manager.

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

F. Enrollment

Each small school shall enroll approximately 500 students, with approximately 125 students per 9th grade class.

G. Small Schools Governance

1. Small School Advisory Councils:

A transition advisory council was established at each new small school on the South Shore 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. South Shore LSC:

During the conversion process, the South Shore LSC had the authority granted to it by the appropriate statutes, Board policies and rules. The South Shore LSC had the authority to advise and make recommendations to the transition Advisory Councils established at each new small school on the South Shore campus. Upon South Shore transferring all remaining students to the new small schools in June 2005, the South Shore LSC ceased to operate and no new council was elected in 2006.

3. Small Schools Governance:

In June 2006 the Board established appointed Local School Councils at the School of the Arts (Board Report 06-0628-RS83), the School of Entrepreneurship (Board Report 06-0628-RS96), the School of Leadership (Board Report 06-0628-RS97) and the School of Technology (Board Report 06-0628-RS98) in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/34-2.4b. 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 South Shore campus participated in a transition committee that consisted of teachers, South Shore LSC members and administrators to identify issues related to the conversion of South Shore.

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. South Shore School Closing:

The Board will conduct a hearing on the closing of South Shore pursuant to the Board's policy on school closings (Board Report 04-0225-PO2, as amended). At such time as the Board authorizes the closure, the South Shore unit number will be closed and a new unit number will be assigned to the campus for administrative purposes related to the campus operations.

H. Staffing

To the extent possible, South Shore 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 & Staff

Upon the creation of the new small schools, a building-wide Campus Manager was hired for the South Shore 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 South Shore Campus Unit has staff positions necessary to the functioning, maintenance and upkeep of the South Shore 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 South Shore 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 will offer common extracurricular activities such as sports teams, evening school and after school matters. 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. South Shore submitted an Illinois State Board of Education LRE plan that reflected the small schools plan and explained how the LRE funds would 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 South Shore campus. Further, each school worked with an external partner to support the school's start up and operations. The Center for City Schools served as the founding external partner for the School of the Arts. It will also seek partnerships with arts-based organizations for internships. Entrepreneurship's primary partner has been the Leadership for Quality Education, but it will also have a variety of business and non-profit partners which provide internships for its students. Chicago State University served as the founding partner for the School of Leadership. The Black United Fund of Chicago, the Coalition for Improved Education, and the Center for Inner City Studies at Northeastern Illinois University served as the primary external partners for the School of Technology.

M. Community Involvement

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

Reviewed for Consideration:



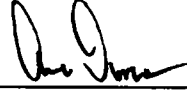
Barbara Eason-Watkins
Chief Education Officer

Noted:



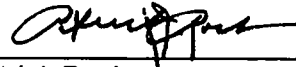
John Maiorca
Chief Financial Officer

Respectfully Submitted:



Arne Duncan
Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form: 



Patrick Rocks
General Counsel