

**RECONSTITUTE NICHOLAS COPERNICUS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND REMOVE AND REPLACE
THE COPERNICUS STAFF, INCLUDING THE PRINCIPAL,
AT THE END OF THE 2007-2008 SCHOOL YEAR**

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:

That the Board of Education of the City of Chicago ("Board") approve the reconstitution of Nicholas Copernicus Elementary School ("Copernicus"), Unit 2900, located at 6010 South Throop Street, Chicago, Illinois and remove and replace its staff, including the principal, at the end of the 2007-2008 school year.

DESCRIPTION:

Statutory Authority. Pursuant to Section 5/34-8.3(d) of the Illinois School Code, 105 ILCS 5/34-8.3(d), and following the opportunity for a public hearing, the Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools ("CEO") may recommend to the Board the reconstitution of a school on probation for at least one year for academic reasons, and the replacement and reassignment of its entire staff, including the principal.

Procedural History: Public Notice, Public Hearings, and the Hearing Officer's Report and Recommendation. On January 24, 2008, the CEO gave written notice of his proposal to turn around Copernicus School by reconstituting the school in accordance with Section 5/34-8.3 (d) of the Illinois School Code to:

- (a) the parents of students enrolled at Copernicus School;
- (b) the principal of Copernicus School;
- (c) the assistant principal(s) of Copernicus School;
- (d) the teachers and staff of Copernicus School; and,
- (e) the Local School Council members of Copernicus School.

Beginning January 28, 2008, the CEO's designee published a notice of a public hearing regarding his proposal to reconstitute Copernicus School. The public hearing was scheduled for February 13, 2008 at 3:00 pm. at 125 South Clark Street, 5th Floor, Board Chambers, Chicago, Illinois.

On February 13, 2008, the CEO, through his appointed Hearing Officer, Michael Hernandez, Esq., convened the public hearing to receive public comment on his proposal to reconstitute Copernicus School. Oral and written comments were received from those members of the public who wished to comment. The record of the public hearing was left open until Thursday, February 14, 2008 at 5:00 p.m., to receive any additional comments that members of the public wished to submit in writing to the hearing officer.

On February 19, 2008, Hearing Officer Hernandez issued a report and recommendation to the CEO in which Hearing Officer Hernandez recommended that the CEO proceed with his proposal to reconstitute Copernicus School.

On February 27, 2008, members of the public were afforded an opportunity to provide public comment to members of the Board at the Board's regular February 27, 2008 meeting, which was held pursuant to a published notice.

Basis for CEO's Recommendation. On December 19, 2007, the CEO published proposed criteria to turn around schools, through reconstitution and other means, which have seen persistent academic failure. The CEO is proposing to turn around, through reconstitutions and other legal means, clusters of elementary and related high schools, so that graduating elementary school students are academically prepared to attend high school and receive a rigorous education in high school. Copernicus School was selected for turn around through reconstitution because of (A) its probation history, (B) it meets the final

turn-around criteria adopted by the CEO, (C) it is part of a cluster of schools proposed for turn around, including Harper High School, which Copernicus School's graduates may attend, and (D) reconstitution is in the best interests of the present students of Copernicus School as detailed below.

A. Copernicus' Probation History. Copernicus School has been on probation for the last eight (8) years. During that time, Copernicus School has received support in the form of: a full-time reading literacy coach; guidance on the development of the school improvement plan and alignment of the school budget to the Chicago Public Schools' priorities; and, direct support from Area Instruction Officers and their support staff including Area Reading, Math, and Special Education Coaches and School Improvement Coordinators.

B. Copernicus School Meets the Turn-Around Criteria. Copernicus School satisfied the school turn-around criteria for the following reasons:

1. **The school is one of the lowest performing schools in the district:** Thirty-three percent (33%) of students at Copernicus met or exceeded ISAT composite standards in the 2006 – 2007 school year.
2. **The low performance is consistent over time:** Thirty percent (30%) of students at Copernicus met or exceeded ISAT composite standards on average from 2005 through 2007.
3. **The low performance is consistent across subjects:**
 - Thirty-one percent (31%) of students at Copernicus met or exceeded ISAT standards on average from 2005 through 2007 in Reading.
 - Thirty-two percent (32%) of students at Copernicus met or exceeded ISAT standards on average from 2005 through 2007 in Math.
 - Twenty-six (26%) of students at Copernicus met or exceeded ISAT standards on average from 2005 through 2007 in Science.
4. **The students at the school are not catching up:**
 - Forty percent (40%) of students at Copernicus made expected year-to-year increases on standardized tests from the 2006 school year to the 2007 school year in Reading.
 - Forty-five percent (45%) of students at Copernicus made expected year-to-year increases on standardized tests from the 2006 school year to the 2007 school year in Math.

C. Copernicus is Part of a Cluster of Related Schools Proposed for Turn Around. In addition to the CEO's proposal to turn around Copernicus School, the CEO is also proposing to turn around Harper High School, in which Copernicus School graduates may enroll. By turning around both Copernicus and Harper High School, the CEO believes that Copernicus students will be better prepared to succeed academically in high school and will receive a more rigorous education in high school.

D. Reconstitution is in the Best Interests of Copernicus School Students. Reconstitution will enable the CEO to select a principal and administrative team to develop and implement a new educational focus at Copernicus School and to hire teaching and educational support staff with credentials to implement that educational focus. No current or prospective Copernicus School student will be displaced from the school.

After reviewing the Hearing Officer's Report and Recommendation the Chief Executive Officer has determined to recommend that the Board approve the reconstitution of Copernicus Elementary School at the end of the 2007-2008 school year. The reconstitution of Copernicus will take effect June 30, 2008.

LSC IMPLICATIONS:

As Copernicus Elementary School will remain on probation after its reconstitution, the powers and duties of the Copernicus Local School Council with respect to the School Improvement Plan and School Expenditure Plan will remain the same after reconstitution. As the result of the removal and replacement of the current principal pursuant to section 5/34-8.3(d) of the Illinois School Code, the Copernicus Local School Council will have no authority to select a new four-year contract principal until the school is removed from probation pursuant to Section VIII of the Board's School Remediation and Probation Policy for the 2007-2008 School Year, or any successor policy on school probation.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS:

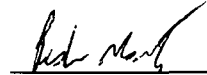
Pursuant to 105 ILSC 5/34-8.3(d)(4), all Copernicus employees, including the principal, will be removed and replaced in accordance with Board rules, policies and applicable collective bargaining agreements, if any.

Approved for Consideration:



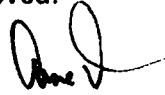
Barbara Eason-Watkins
Chief Education Officer

Within Appropriation:



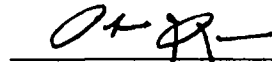
Pedro Martinez
Chief Financial Officer

Approved:

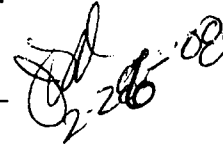


Arne Duncan
Chief Executive Officer

Approved as to Legal Form:



Patrick J. Rocks
General Counsel



02-28-08