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## News Release

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **CPS Announces More Rigorous Charter School Accountability Policy**

**CHICAGO** – Chicago Public Schools (CPS) today announced a proposed charter school accountability policy that will hold charters to the same academic standards as District-run schools and allow CPS to take swift action against poor performers.

In conjunction with this policy, the District will recommend immediately placing 10 charter schools on an Academic Warning List, which could result in the closure of these schools if performance does not significantly improve. Four of these schools are receiving additional scrutiny and could be recommended for revocation or non-renewal.

“Establishing high-quality school options in every neighborhood throughout Chicago is among our highest priorities, but we cannot make that a reality without a rigorous accountability policy that holds every public school in Chicago to the same standard,” said CPS CEO Forrest Claypool. “On day one, this policy will allow us to take immediate action on charters that are not meeting our standards, and in the long term it will ensure schools that don’t serve children well don’t get to operate in Chicago.”

To ensure schools are meeting the District’s standards, CPS will leverage each charter’s School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP) score to evaluate performance. SQRP is a proven accountability tool and holding charter schools to higher standards based on SQRP will create parity among all CPS schools.

Under the new policy, which will be voted on by the Board of Education at its October 2015 Board Meeting, any charter that has a Level 3 SQRP rating, a two-year SQRP point value average of 2.5 or lower, or a Level 2 rating in three consecutive years will be placed on the Academic Warning List. Schools placed on the Academic Warning List must improve their performance or risk losing their charter. Charter schools placed on the Academic Warning List will be required to submit a written remediation plan to rectify the problems that led to the school’s performance. If a school does not meet the terms of its remediation plan in one year, it will be recommended for charter revocation. Under the new policy, a charter will also be recommended for revocation if it is on the Warning List for two consecutive years.

In addition to setting standards for charter revocation, the policy also includes recommended guidelines for the non-renewal of charters. If a school is both on the Academic Warning List when its contract is up for renewal and it has a two-year SQRP rating of 2.5 or below, it will be recommended for non-renewal by the Board. CPS

will also recommend a campus for non-renewal if it was on the Academic Warning List for two years during its contract, and it is not at least a Level 2+ school in the final year of its charter agreement.

If the new policy is approved by the Board of Education, the following 10 schools will be placed on the Academic Warning List:

- Amandla Charter High School
- ASPIRA – Early College High School
- Betty Shabazz – Barbara A. Sizemore Academy Elementary School
- Bronzeville Lighthouse Charter Elementary School
- CICS – ChicagoQuest High School
- CICS – Larry Hawkins High School
- Galapagos Elementary Charter School
- Instituto – Justice Lozano High School
- Kwame Nkrumah Academy Elementary School
- Prologue – Joshua Johnston Charter High School

Three of the schools – Amandla, Shabazz –Sizemore, and CICS –Hawkins –will receive additional scrutiny because they were also on last year’s Warning List. The District is reviewing the Warning List remediation plans submitted last year by these schools, and if it is determined that they have not met the terms of their plans they will be recommended for contract revocation.

Bronzeville Lighthouse will also receive additional scrutiny because it is in the final year of its contract. If the Board adopts this policy, additional action may be warranted, including contract non-renewal.

In addition to holding low-performing charters accountable, this policy aims to ensure that only high-performing charter operators are allowed to replicate and expand to meet unmet demand in the community. By setting high standards for existing charter operators, CPS will ensure that only the best charters are able to add additional campuses and seats to meet unmet demand throughout the city. And while the new policy will set objective criteria that clearly defines the academic standards charter operators must achieve to be considered for expansion or replication, the District will only recommend proposals that either relieve overcrowding or provide a high-quality option to a neighborhood with limited access to quality seats, regardless of the operator’s quality.

“In order to ensure that families in Chicago have access to high-quality options in every part of the city, we must be strategic and thoughtful about opening quality schools,” said CPS Chief Education Officer Janice Jackson. “By limiting charter expansion to only the best operators and proposals, we can be confident that proven programs are being established in parts of the city where quality options are needed.”

CPS is using the quality guidelines set out by the proposed charter policy to strategically guide charter proposal recommendations, and the District is recommending the Board approve two of the 11 new charter campus proposals that will be voted on at the October 2015 Board Meeting. The two recommended proposals were submitted by operators that have proven track records of operating high-quality schools that families throughout Chicago have consistently chosen for their children.

CPS is recommending the approval of KIPP Chicago Campus #5, which will provide an additional quality option that the Austin, West Garfield Park, and West Humboldt Park communities have been seeking. KIPP Chicago has a strong academic record, and this new campus will provide a sought after option for the community.

The District is also recommending the approval of Noble Campus #17, which will provide an additional quality option on Chicago's southwest side to meet unmet demand. Seven of the nine high schools within two miles of Noble are above their ideal capacity, and this campus will provide a much-needed quality option to the community.

The two new campuses CPS is recommending for approval will not receive start-up and incubation funding from the District. If approved by the Board of Education, the schools will receive funding on a per-pupil basis to educate the students that have chosen to attend the school. If approved, both campuses would open for SY 16-17.

The proposals that will be evaluated by the Board of Education on Wednesday were submitted as part of the 2014-2015 New Schools RFP, which began in April 2015 and sought out new, high-quality school options. CPS is required to seek proposals for new schools on an annual basis, and the District utilizes this requirement as an opportunity to identify high-quality options that are capable of meeting unmet needs throughout the District.

In addition to the two proposals that CPS is recommending for approval, the District is recommending denial of the following applications that were received through the New Schools RFP:

- Connected Futures Academies Campuses 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
- Lighthouse Inc. New Life Academy
- Perseid Charter School
- STARS Project Engineering Academy Charter School
- Youth Connections Charter School's Rincon Family Services Young Adult Learning Academy Campus

At the Board Meeting, CPS will also recommend the Board approve a grade expansion of KIPP Create. The expansion will allow the school to serve students in grades K-4, in addition to grades 5-8, which are currently offered at the school. If approved, the grade level expansion would begin in SY 16-17.