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Strong Chicago Roots Reflected in 19 New School Recommendations

Proposals Are for Renaissance 2010 Schools That Would Open in 2008 and 2009

Chicago Public Schools Chief Executive Officer Arne Duncan today unveiled 19 new school proposals under Renaissance 2010 that he plans to recommend to the Chicago Board of Education for a vote on Oct. 24, following public hearings next week.

If approved, the schools would open either in the fall of 2008 or the fall of 2009. This is the fourth round of schools to be recommended since Mayor Richard M. Daley launched Renaissance 2010 in 2004. This year, at least four of the proposed schools are being headed up by design teams or principal candidates who have strong ties to various communities in Chicago.

“Each year, we ask the best educators here in Chicago and across the country to submit proposals for new schools that will offer our children diverse, high-quality education options,” Duncan said. “It’s nice that more and more of these great proposals are being submitted by people who were born in Chicago, raised in Chicago and have strong roots in their communities.”

Duncan, Chief Education Officer Barbara Eason-Watkins, and several other officials made the announcement at Polaris Charter Academy at Morse, 620 N. Sawyer Ave., one of 18 Renaissance schools that opened last month. Polaris is headed by three Chicago teachers, all of whom are Golden Apple winners.

Some of this year’s proposed design teams or principal candidates with strong ties to Chicago are:

- **Mike Bakalis, president and CEO of American Quality Schools (AQS)**
Raised in the Austin community, Bakalis has submitted a proposal for AQS Plato Learning Academy, a high-quality elementary school option for the neighborhood he grew up in. The elementary school would provide more academic rigor, aimed at fully preparing students to succeed at the high school level.

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- **Robin Johnson, principal candidate for Learn Charter School West Garfield Park**
Raised on the West Side of Chicago, Johnson struggled academically at various CPS high schools, including Lane Tech and Orr, before she became pregnant and dropped out. Determined to get her high school diploma, Johnson graduated from an alternative evening high school, went on to college to become a teacher, and wants to give back to her community.
- **Christina Page, principal candidate for Perspectives Chicago Lawn**
A native of Chicago's South Side, Page graduated from a CPS elementary school, but did not attend a CPS high school because her parents were not satisfied with the neighborhood options. After attending a boarding high school in Indiana on a \$15,000 scholarship, Page went on to college to become a teacher, and now wants to help offer high-quality neighborhood options on the South Side.
- **Bogdana Chkoumbova, principal candidate for Disney II**
Born and raised in Bulgaria, Chkoumbova taught second-grade before moving to Chicago in 1997. She became a special education teacher at Chopin Elementary before entering and graduating from a CPS-funded principal preparation program. Now, both of her daughters attend CPS schools.

Mayor Daley began Renaissance 2010 three years ago to create 100 new schools by the year 2010, replacing low-performing schools with new educational options in underserved communities and relieving school overcrowding in communities experiencing rapid growth.

So far, 55 new schools have opened under Ren 10, along with three other new schools, Dodge, Williams and Terrell, which were opened under a pilot program in 2003 and 2004.

The 19 new school proposals this year include six high schools, three combined middle school-high schools, one middle school, and nine elementary schools. Fifteen of the schools are slated to open fall of 2008, and four schools are slated to open fall of 2009, pending approval from the Board of Education. The recommendations are:

- **Virtual Opportunities Inside a School Environment (VOISE)**, a proposed performance school that would serve grades 9-12. It would fully integrate technology into the classroom to provide students with enriched learning environments. VOISE is proposed for fall of 2008 at Austin High School, 231 N Pine.
- **Noble Street Charter High School UIC**, a proposed charter school that would serve grades 9-12. It would have a college prep curriculum with an emphasis on careers in health and medical fields as part of its partnership with the University of Illinois at Chicago. The school is proposed for fall of 2008 on the near West Side near the UIC campus. The Noble Network of Charter Schools currently operates five schools throughout the city.

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- **Noble Street Charter School Comer Campus**, a proposed charter school that would serve grades 9-12. It would have a college prep curriculum and have a partnership with Gary Comer Youth Center. The school is proposed to for fall of 2008 in the Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood. The Noble Network of Charter Schools currently operates five schools throughout the city.
- **Community Services West**, a proposed contract school that would serve grades 9-12. It would incorporate strategies to assist homeless students and foster children ages 17 to 21, as well as students who have dropped out of school or do not have a strong family support structure. Community Services West is proposed for fall of 2008 at 1239 S. Pulaski.
- **Air Force Academy**, a proposed performance school that would serve students in grades 9-12. It would have a rigorous college prep curriculum designed to prepare students for post-secondary education. The Air Force Academy is proposed for fall of 2009 at a location yet to be identified.
- **Chicago High School for the Arts**, a proposed contract school that would serve students grades 9-12. A state of the art performing arts school with a comprehensive college prep curriculum, it would provide artistically gifted students with intensive pre-professional arts training. Chicago High School for the Arts is proposed for fall of 2009 at a location yet to be identified.
- **Amandla Charter School**, a proposed charter school that would serve grades 5-12, with a college prep curriculum starting at the middle school level. Founded by several CPS teachers, including a Building Excellent Schools Fellow, this school would share space with Parker Elementary, 6800 S. Stewart. If approved, the school will begin accepting fifth-graders in 2008.
- **Perspectives Chicago Lawn**, a proposed charter school that would serve grades 6-12. Its culture and curriculum will reflect the Perspectives philosophy, "A Disciplined Life." The school is proposed for fall of 2008. Currently, Perspectives Charter School operates four charter schools across the city.
- **Perspectives Math and Science Academy**, a proposed charter school that would serve grades 6-12 and similarly reflect the Perspectives philosophy, "A Disciplined Life," with a math and science focus. The school, partnering with the Illinois Institute of Technology, is proposed for fall of 2008 at 300 W. Pershing. Currently, Perspectives Charter School operates four charter schools across the city.
- **University of Chicago**, a proposed charter school that would serve grades 6-8, with a college prep curriculum and a mission to strengthen the community through research, leadership and service. The school would also serve as a professional development site for teachers, principals and support staff, and is proposed for fall of 2008 at Woodson South Elementary, 4414 S. Evans. Currently, University of Chicago operates three charter school campuses across the city.
- **The Academy for Global Citizenship**, a proposed contract school that would serve grades K-8 and incorporate the curriculum of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program and focus on global citizenship. The school is proposed for fall of 2008 at 4101 W 51st St.

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- **LEARN Charter School West Garfield Park**, a proposed charter school that would serve grades K-8. Its curriculum would focus on preparing students to be contributing citizens of tomorrow in a safe, nurturing environment today. The school is proposed for fall of 2008 at a yet to be determined location in West Garfield Park. Currently, LEARN operates an elementary charter school in North Lawndale.
- **Disney II**, a proposed performance school that would serve grades K-8. Its curriculum would be modeled after Disney Magnet School, an elementary school located on the North Side, and would incorporate many of the same successful instructional practices. Disney II is one of two franchised elementary schools proposed for fall of 2008 at a location yet to be determined.
- **Burroughs II**, a proposed performance school that would serve grades K-8. Its curriculum would be modeled after the curriculum at Burroughs Elementary, a neighborhood school on the Southwest Side, and incorporate many of the same successful instructional practices. Burroughs II is one of two franchised elementary schools proposed for fall of 2008 at a location yet to be identified.
- **Chicago International Charter School-Friesse**, a proposed charter school that would serve grades K-3. It would have an innovative and rigorous curriculum. The school is proposed for fall of 2008 at 9535 S. Throop.
- **American Quality Schools (AQS) Plato Learning Academy**, a proposed contract school that would serve grades K-8. Its curriculum would incorporate a mission and belief that every child has the innate capacity to achieve success through high academic and personal standards, competent and caring faculty and staff, and involved and caring parents. AQS Plato is proposed for fall 2008 in the Austin community.
- **Kwame Nkrumah Academy**, a proposed contract school, would serve grades K-5. The school takes its name from the first president of Ghana, Francis Nwia Nkrumah, considered the founder of the Pan-African movement. Its curriculum will be African-centered, and approach teaching and learning through the African concept “Ubuntu,” which means, “I am because we are” and “my humanity is expressed through your humanity.” The school is proposed for fall of 2008 at 901 E. 95th St.
- **LEARN Charter School North Lawndale II**, a proposed charter school that would serve grades K-8 with a curriculum similar to the other LEARN proposal. The school is proposed for fall of 2009 at a yet to be determined location in North Lawndale.
- **Hope Institute**, a proposed contract school that would serve students in grades K-8 with autism and developmental disabilities. The Hope Institute for Children and Families, based in Springfield, has proposed the school for fall of 2009 at a location yet to be determined.

The Chicago Public Schools is the nation’s third-largest school system. It includes more than 600 schools and about 415,000 students.