

**Subject:**

Action on a Request to Approve the Non-Instrumentality Charter School Contract with Highland Community School, Inc. for Highland Community School to Begin with the 2020-2021 School Year

**Background:**

Highland Community School (Highland) was established as a non-instrumentality charter school beginning with the 1996-1997 school year. During each renewal cycle since, the Board has approved a five-year renewed contract. The current contract is for up to a maximum of 435 full-time-equivalent (FTE) pupils in grades K3 through 8. Highland is located at 1706 West Highland Boulevard.

Highland's mission is to create a community of diverse families and educators working together to offer quality Montessori education in a nurturing environment that enriches, empowers, and inspires children to reach their potential and encourages parents to become responsible for and involved with their children's education.

On December 19, 2019, the Board approved a five-year renewal for Highland and authorized the Administration, in collaboration with the Board's Designee and the Office of the City Attorney, to begin contract negotiations with representatives from the Highland Community School, Inc. for Highland Community School.

In April 2020, representatives from Highland, the MPS Office of Board Governance, the Office of the City Attorney and the MPS Administration reviewed and negotiated the proposed modifications to the model non-instrumentality charter school contract and agreed to the attached redline contract.

Contingent upon the Board's approval, Highland accepts the attached, non-instrumentality charter contract with the following modifications:

- a. Whereas clause has been added to clarify that charter school's governing board is a party to the contract, to reflect current law, and to reflect historical background;
- b. The name of the school is Highland Community School and the school will be located at 1706 W. Highland Avenue;
- c. The name of the person who will be in charge of the charter school has been updated to reflect that Tracy Williams shall be the school leader, and language has been added to reflect the manner in which administrative services will be provided;
- d. Language has been revised to reflect applicability of MPS policies and statutes;
- e. Language relating to performance indicators has been updated to reflect applicability and current;
- f. Language relating to charter school governance has been updated to provide clarity and to be consistent with statutory language relating to charter school governance;
- g. Language relating to requirements for admission to school has been updated;
- h. Language relating to financial and performance audits has been updated to reflect current practices and to reflect selection of method for financial and performance audits;
- i. Language has been updated to reflect selection of disciplinary guidelines;
- j. Language relating to facilities, indemnification and insurance has been updated;
- k. Language relating to the effect of the establishment of the Charter School on the liability of the Board has been updated;
- l. Language relating to background screening has been updated;
- m. Language relating to right to inspect and receive requested information and reports has been updated;

- n. Language relating to calendar has been updated;
- o. Language relating to annual administrative fee has been updated;
- p. Language relating to purchasing has been updated;
- q. Language relating to annual administrative fee has been updated to reflect two percent administrative fee;
- r. Language relating to transportation and nutrition has been updated;
- s. Language relating to Local Education Agency (LEA) responsibilities and district's responsibilities as School Food Authority (SFA) has been clarified;
- t. Language has been updated to reflect that Highland Community School will serve up to a maximum of 435 FTE pupils in grades K3 through 8;
- u. Language relating to payment has been updated and to reflect funding for K3 students;
- v. The term of the contract is five years, to start with the 2020-2021 school year and to end with the last regularly scheduled day of the 2024-2025 school year;
- w. Language relating to modification or termination of contract has been revised to provide clarity and reflect current practices;
- x. Language has been added to demonstrate that parties mutually agree to the terms of the contract;
- y. Technical revisions have been made throughout the contract; and
- z. Technical revisions have made to Appendix A (Proposal).

**Fiscal Impact:**

The funds for this charter school contract are included as part of the FY21 budget process. The per-pupil funding will be based on the state-determined amount for students in grades K5 through 8. Students in grade K3 and K4 will be funded at 0.6 FTE of the per-pupil amount, and the annual administrative fee has been revised to two percent.

**Implementation and Assessment Plan:**

Upon approval, the contract will be effective starting with the 2020-2021 school year and ending with the 2024-2025 school year.

A copy of the contract will be forwarded to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

**Recommendation:** The Administration recommends that the Board approve the attached non-instrumentality charter school contract with Highland Community School, Inc. for Highland Community School to begin with the 2020-2021 school year and end on the last regularly scheduled day of the 2024-2025 school year.