



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
www.isbe.net

Jesse H. Ruiz
Chairman

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

DATE: March 23, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Pat Quinn, Governor
The Honorable John J. Cullerton, Senate President
The Honorable Christine Radogno, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Michael J. Madigan, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Tom Cross, House Minority Leader

FROM: Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: Independent Charter School Authorizer Task Force Report

The Independent Charter School Authorizer Task Force Report is being submitted pursuant to PA 96-0105.

The task force was tasked with (i) compiling a comparative analysis of charter school authorizing practices across the United States; (ii) conducting an assessment of the capacity of school districts in the State to authorized charter schools; (iii) assessing the ability and interest of this State's public universities in serving as charter school authorizers; (iv) analyzing the capacity of the State Board as a charter school authorizer; and (v) making recommendations as to the amount of funding necessary to operate an independent authorizer and the system of support necessary for such an independent authorizer to operate successfully.

For additional copies of any of these reports, or for more specific information about any of the items, contact Darren Reisberg, General Counsel/Deputy Superintendent at 217/782-8535.

cc: Mark Mahoney, Clerk of the House
Jillayne Rock, Secretary of the Senate
Legislative Research Unit
State Government Report Center

Enclosure

Illinois State Board of Education Independent Charter School Authorizer Task Force

This report of the Independent Charter School Authorizer Task Force is respectfully submitted to the Governor and the Illinois General Assembly. The task force recommends that the existing state charter school law in Illinois be modified in order to improve the quality of charter school authorization throughout the state. Specific changes are outlined in this report.

BACKGROUND

In 2009 the Illinois General Assembly significantly revised the Illinois charter school law. See P.A. 96-105: <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/96/PDF/096-0105.pdf>. The primary revision doubled the number of charter schools permitted in the State. Whereas the law previously limited the number of charters in Chicago to 30 and the rest of the State to 30 (60 in all), the law now allows for up to 70 charters in Chicago (plus an additional 5 in Chicago devoted to re-enrolled dropouts) and 45 in the rest of the State.

As part of the legislative process, though, an observation was made regarding the lack of charter schools outside of Chicago. During the 2008-09 school year, there were 39 charter schools in Illinois—29 of which were in Chicago. Moreover, a number of the 29 charter schools in Chicago had—and still have—multiple campuses. For example, Chicago International had 12 campuses and Youth Connections had 21 campuses. Thus, despite the fact that the law had permitted up to 30 charter schools outside of Chicago, and now permits up to 45, only 10 such charter schools are in operation.

Some of the stakeholders involved in the negotiation of the 2009 charter school bill believed that one way to increase the number of charter schools outside of Chicago would be to follow the lead of some other states and establish an Independent Charter School Authorizer. Instead of applying to the local educational agency (i.e., school district) wherein the charter school would be located, a charter applicant could apply directly to this Independent Charter School Authorizer. The decision was made, though, to keep any final decision regarding the creation of an Independent Charter School Authorizer separate from the other issues being negotiated in the 2009 bill.

Instead, P.A. 96-105 charged the Illinois State Board of Education with convening an Independent Charter School Authorizer Task Force to study the need, if any, for an independent charter school authorizer in Illinois. The law required the task force to:

- compile a comparative analysis of charter school authorizing practices across the United States;
- conduct an assessment of the capacity of school districts in Illinois to authorize charter schools;
- assess the ability and interest of Illinois' public universities in serving as charter school authorizers;
- analyze the capacity of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to serve as a charter school authorizer; and,

- make recommendations as to the amount of funding necessary to operate an independent authorizer and the system of support, at the Illinois State Board of Education or otherwise, necessary for any such independent authorizer to operate successfully.

Sixteen members from a variety of stakeholder groups were appointed to the Independent Charter School Authorizer Task Force. A list of the task force members appears in Appendix A. The task force unanimously selected Darren Reisberg, Deputy Superintendent and General Counsel for the Illinois State Board of Education, and Senator Heather Steans to serve as co-chairs. In addition to the appointed members, and after consultation with the Executive Director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Bette Bergeron from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville joined the task force as an invited guest to represent all twelve of the public institutions of higher education in Illinois. The Illinois Independent Charter School Authorizer Task force met seven times on the following dates:

- September 24, 2009
- October 28, 2009
- November 10, 2009
- November 17, 2009
- December 14, 2009
- January 20, 2010
- February 22, 2010

Copies of the approved minutes from each meeting are posted at:
http://www.isbe.state.il.us/charter/html/task_force.htm

RELEVANT ILLINOIS CHARTER LAW

Application Process

Section 27A-7 of the Illinois School Code currently requires that a charter school applicant submit its proposal to the State Board of Education and the local school board in the form of a proposed contract entered into between the local school board and the governing body of the proposed charter school. The proposal shall include, without limitation, the following information:

- A description of the charter school's educational program, pupil performance standards, curriculum, school year, school days, and hours of operation;
- A description of the charter school's plan for evaluating pupil performance, the types of assessments that will be used to measure pupil progress towards achievement of the school's pupil performance standards, the timeline for achievement of those standards, and the procedures for taking corrective action in the event that pupil performance at the charter school falls below those standards;
- Evidence that the terms of the charter as proposed are economically sound for both the charter school and the school district, a proposed budget for the term of the charter, a

description of the manner in which an annual audit of the financial and administrative operations of the charter school, including any services provided by the school district, are to be conducted, and a plan for the displacement of pupils, teachers, and other employees who will not attend or be employed in the charter school; and,

- A description of the governance and operation of the charter school, including the nature and extent of parental, professional educator, and community involvement in the governance and operation of the charter school.

See 105 ILCS 5/27A-7(a). As discussed further herein, the Task Force discussed modification of the foregoing application process as a means of strengthening public charter school authorizing in Illinois.

Authorization

Within 45 days of receipt of a charter school proposal, the local school board shall convene a public meeting to obtain information to assist the board in its decision to grant or deny the charter school. Within 30 days of the public meeting, the local school board shall vote, in a public meeting, to either grant or deny the charter school proposal. Within 7 days of that vote, the local school board shall file a report with the State Board granting or denying the proposal. 105 ILCS 5/27A-7

- If the local school board approves the charter proposal, then within 14 days of receipt of the local school board's report, the State Board shall determine whether the approved charter proposal is consistent with the provisions of Article 27A of the School Code and, if it is, certify the proposal. See 105 ILCS 5/27A-7(f).
- If, on the other hand, the local school board denies the charter proposal, the State Board may reverse the local board's decision if the State Board finds that the charter school or the charter school proposal (i) is in the compliance with Article 27A of the School Code, and (ii) is in the best interests of the students it is designed to serve. The State Board may condition the granting of an appeal on the acceptance by the charter school of funding in an amount less than that requested in the proposal submitted to the local school board. See 105 ILCS 5/27A-9(e).

If the State Board on appeal reverses a local board's decision or if a charter is approved by referendum (see 105 ILCS 5/27A-6.5), the State Board shall act as the authorized chartering entity and shall perform all functions under Article 27A otherwise performed by the local school board. The State Board shall:

- Report the aggregate number of charter school pupils resident in a school district to that district and notify the district of the amount of funding to be paid by the State Board to the charter school enrolling such students;
- Require the charter school to maintain accurate records of daily attendance that shall be deemed sufficient to file claims under Section 18-8.05 of the School Code (relating to General State Aid), notwithstanding any other requirements of Section 18-8.05 regarding hours of instruction and teacher certification; and,

- Withhold from funds otherwise due the district the funds authorized by Article 27A to be paid to the charter school and shall pay such amounts to the charter school.

Since 1996, when charter schools were first permitted in Illinois, approximately 42 denials by local school boards have been appealed to the State Board, and the State Board has reversed two (or about 5%). The first was for the Thomas Jefferson Charter School, located in Des Plaines, Illinois. In 2003, however, the State Board refused to renew Thomas Jefferson Charter School's charter because of, among other reasons, the school's persistent failure to address a significant number of compliance findings related to students with disabilities. The second was the Prairie Crossing Charter School in Grayslake, Illinois. Prairie Crossing serves students in grades Kindergarten through 8 from two districts—Woodland 50 and Fremont 79. Its charter was first granted by the State Board after an appeal in 1999, was renewed by the State Board in 2004, and was again renewed by the State Board in 2009.

The State Board, which has had a dramatic reduction in staff over the course of the last 10 years, is able to allocate only .5 FTE to charter school matters. The State Board therefore expressed concern about an increase in its authorization of charter schools without a corresponding increase in both resources and expertise.

Non-renewal/Revocation

Section 27A-9 of the School Code sets forth the manner by which a charter may be non-renewed or revoked.

(c) A charter may be revoked or not renewed if the local school board or State Board, as the chartering entity, clearly demonstrates that the charter school did any of the following, or otherwise failed to comply with the requirements of this law:

(1) Committed a material violation of any of the conditions, standards, or procedures set forth in the charter.

(2) Failed to meet or make reasonable progress toward achievement of the content standards or pupil performance standards identified in the charter.

(3) Failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.

(4) Violated any provision of law from which the charter school was not exempted.

In the case of revocation, the local school board or State Board, as the chartering entity, shall notify the charter school in writing of the reason why the charter is subject to revocation. The charter school shall submit a written plan to the local school board or State Board, whichever is

applicable, to rectify the problem. The plan shall include a timeline for implementation, which shall not exceed 2 years or the date of the charter's expiration, whichever is earlier. If the local school board or the State Board, as the chartering entity, finds that the charter school has failed to implement the plan of remediation and adhere to the timeline, then the chartering entity shall revoke the charter. Except in situations of an emergency where the health, safety, or education of the charter school's students is at risk, the revocation shall take place at the end of a school year. Nothing in this amendatory Act of the 96th General Assembly shall be construed to prohibit an implementation timetable that is less than 2 years in duration.

105 ILCS 5/27A-9. Notably, however, the State Board of Education does not have the authority to non-renew or to revoke a district authorized charter school.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZATION IN ILLINOIS

A majority of the Task Force members generally agreed on a number of ways to strengthen public charter school authorizing in Illinois.

Definition of an “Authorizer”

The Charter School Law should include a specific definition of an “authorizer”. For example, from p. 28 of “A New Model Law for Supporting The Growth of High Quality Public Charter Schools” (the “Model Law”)¹:

An “authorizer” means an entity authorized under this Act to review applications, decide whether to approve or reject applications, enter into charter contracts with applicants, oversee public charter schools, and decide whether to renew, not renew, or revoke charter contracts.

The Charter School Law should also clarify whether the “authorizer,” the charter school itself, or both can constitute a “Local Educational Agency” for purposes of eligibility for federal grants.

Authorizer Powers and Duties

The Charter School Law or implementing state rules should strengthen the description of the standards for authorizers and include a more detailed discussion of the full range of authorizer powers and duties. For example, from pp. 32-33 in the Model Law:

- Soliciting and evaluating applications;

¹ A *New Model Law* was published by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools in June 2009. The document is available at http://www.publiccharters.org/files/publications/DB-ModelLaw_Report_01-12-10.pdf.

- Approving quality applications;
- Declining to approve weak applications;
- Negotiating and executing charter contracts;
- Monitoring schools; and,
- Determining whether each charter contract merits renewal, nonrenewal, or revocation.

Application Process

The Charter School Law and/or state rules should include a more detailed application process to be followed by authorizers in the State. There was general agreement that the manner by which the Chicago Public Schools has solicited and reviewed charter school applications is an exemplary model.

The Task Force heard presentations regarding the process in Chicago from Jaime Guzman of the Chicago Public Schools as well as the Renaissance School Fund. The charter school proposal process in Chicago takes place over six months, which begins with the annual publication of a Request for Proposals (RFP) in April. The RFP ensures that the process and the criteria for the applications are transparent. CPS staff work closely with their external partners, such as the Illinois Facilities Fund, the Renaissance School Fund (RSF), and a panel of experts, to evaluate the proposed charter schools for the strengths and weaknesses of their plans for governance, finance, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and community involvement. CPS also holds public hearings to provide the community with an opportunity to learn more about the proposals. After receiving input from the community, CPS leaders, and external partners, the CPS Board makes a final decision in October. Historically, CPS has opened approximately 25 percent of the schools that were proposed at the beginning of the annual RFP cycle – evidence of their focus on quality over quantity. After the schools are approved, CPS has also demonstrated their capacity and commitment to conduct rigorous, fair, and transparent monitoring, oversight and renewal processes.

With 871 school districts throughout the state, of different sizes and with varied levels of resources, it is unreasonable to expect that Chicago's high-quality authorization process could be replicated uniformly throughout the state. The task force recognizes that the Chicago model is resource intensive, so it will not be possible for smaller districts in the state to conduct a similar process. However, the state of Illinois can provide districts with models and guidebooks to assist them with implementation of the key elements that have been successful in Chicago.

Examples of ways in which Illinois' law can be modified to incorporate best practices can be found on pp. 35-39 of the Model Law:

- Authorizer-issued request for proposals (including application requirements and approval criteria);
- Application elements;
- Thorough evaluation of each application including an in-person interview and a public meeting; and,
- All charter approval or denial decisions made in a public meeting, with authorizers stating reasons for denials in writing.

Authorizer Accountability

The Illinois General Assembly should require that all authorizers in the state will be accountable to ISBE. The Charter School Law and/or state rules should require all authorizers to submit a report to the State Board of Education and the General Assembly annually that summarizes relevant information. For example, from p. 33 in the Model Law:

- Academic and financial performance of all authorized schools (based upon data submitted by public charter schools through other reporting requirements);
- Authorizing functions provided to schools; and,
- Financial records of all operating costs.

ISBE's powers should also be strengthened in the existing legislation. Based on the annual reports that ISBE receives from authorizers and their ongoing monitoring of both charter schools and authorizers, ISBE should be granted the power to remove the power to authorize from any authorizer in the state if the authorizer does not demonstrate a commitment to high-quality authorization practices and, if necessary, revoke the chronically low performing charters authorized by these organizations at the time of such removal.

Further, school district authorizers should be responsible and accountable for facilitating the sharing of charter school best practices with non-charter schools.

Quasi-Independent Statewide Public Charter School Commission

The Charter School Law should create a quasi-independent statewide public charter school commission that would review charter applications in certain scenarios.

The Task Force spent the large majority of its time discussing whether Illinois should have more than one type of charter authorizer and, if so, what the other type(s) of charter authorizers should be.

A table listing each state and the type(s) of authorizer(s) in that state is attached as Appendix B. Like Illinois, most states with charter laws allow local school boards to serve as charter authorizers. Thirty states and the District of Columbia also permit non-district entities to serve as charter authorizers, usually in addition to local school boards. These non-district organizations include:

- regional educational entities (5 states)
- existing state boards or departments of education (16 states)
- nonprofit organizations (2 states)
- cities (2 states)
- universities and colleges (11 states)
- new, independent state chartering boards (7 states and the District of Columbia)

Todd Ziebarth, a Task Force member, and Vice President for Policy at the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, remarked that all types of authorizers can be successful if they demonstrate a clear desire to become an authorizer, have the appropriate infrastructure to carry out their authorizer tasks, and utilize a decision process that is driven by data. Multiple authorizers in a state can be beneficial because applicants are provided options. If, for example, a school district does not have the capacity to conduct a high-quality authorization process, the school district can encourage charter school applicants to apply through an organization that authorizes charters statewide. Such an independent statewide agency can also model best authorizing practices for districts that do choose to authorize and provide technical assistance to help those districts develop high-quality authorizing processes. In addition, as one of the goals of the charter school movement is to increase choice, an alternative authorizer extends that principle of choice, not just to schools, but also to agencies that can serve as authorizers.

Nevertheless, the Task Force recognized that, while multiple authorizers can be beneficial, some states arguably have too many authorizers. For example, Ohio is a state that has more than 75 public or private entities authorizing charters. There are 332 public charter schools operating in the state. Unfortunately, the quantity of schools was initially emphasized over the quality of the authorization process in Ohio. As a result, charter schools in Ohio, on average, are not high-performing. The Task Force agreed that the Illinois General Assembly should focus on a goal of improving the quality of the authorizing process statewide rather than increasing the quantity of charter schools in the state.

In its attempt to determine the number and types of authorizers for Illinois, the Task Force wrestled with, among others, the following questions:

- What, if anything, is broken about the current state of law, where charter applicants must first apply to the local school district and, if that application is denied, can appeal to the State Board of Education? If the current system is broken, would an independent charter school authorizer be the means to fix it?
- If an independent charter school authorizer is a viable means to fix a broken system, then what type or types of independent charter school authorizer(s) would work in Illinois? A statewide commission? A body within the State Board of Education? Higher education institutions?
- If one or more independent charter school authorizers are established:
 - Should charter applicants be required to first apply to the local school district and therefore provide the local school district with the opportunity to approve, deny, or simply pass on the opportunity to review (the Idaho model)? Or, should charter applicants be allowed the choice, at the outset, to apply to the local school district or to the independent charter school authorizer(s)?
 - Should local school districts with demonstrated capacity and expertise with respect to charter schools be able to apply for exclusive authority to authorize charter schools operating within the district? Should local school districts under a specific student population be provided exclusive authority to authorize charter schools operating within the district?

- What amount of funding for authorizers is necessary to best ensure success and how will that funding mechanism affect the school districts of residence of students choosing to attend the charter school?

* * * *

Is the current system broken and would the establishment of one or more statewide charter school authorizers fix it?

Several Task Force members supported the status quo in Illinois because they are committed to respecting the tradition of local control. These members argued that school districts should authorize charters in Illinois because district leaders best understand the local context and the needs of the district. They asserted that district leaders want the best for students in their district, make decisions based on that principle, and should be held accountable for upholding that principle. If district leaders do not give charter applicants a fair hearing, the applicants can appeal to the state through the process that is outlined in state law. A minority report, authored by the group of task force members who support local control, is attached in Appendix C.

While some representatives of the Task Force took the position that the status quo should persist, the data does suggest the rebuttable presumption of disinterest in charter schools both at the school district level outside of Chicago and at the State Board of Education. (See Appendix D: Charter Approvals, Denials, Disapprovals and Non-Renewals). The data demonstrates the following:

- Currently, there are 29 charter schools in Chicago, some of which have multiple campuses as permitted by applicable law. There are 10 charter schools outside of Chicago.
- Since 1996, charter school proposals have been denied by local school districts on 148 occasions, 96 of those were by Chicago and 52 outside of Chicago (the attached table does not include the two local district denials that were then approved by the State Board of Education appeal, but the numbers here do include those two).
- Of these 148 local school district denials, 42 were appealed to the State Board of Education (10 of the appeals were from Chicago denials; 32 of the appeals were from non-Chicago denials);
- Two of the 42 appeals were granted by the State Board of Education.

Representatives of local school districts and the State Board of Education did rebut that presumption, emphasizing that the denial of a charter proposal, or the rejection of an appeal of a local school district's denial, cannot and should not be assumed to be attributable to anti-charter school sentiment. Task Force member Paul Swanstrom, Superintendent of Joliet High School District 204, earnestly recounted the fact that the two charter proposals denied by his school board were denied due to the low quality of the proposals. Moreover, Task Force Co-Chair Darren Reisberg noted that, while State Board of Education staff were concerned about granting charter school appeals because of the lack of resources at the State Board to effectively authorize charter schools, all denials of appeals were done on sound legal bases.

Nevertheless, after examining several possible options, the Task Force saw the benefit in creating a quasi-independent statewide public charter school commission that would review charter applications in certain scenarios and possibly allow charter schools to proliferate appropriately outside of Chicago.

What type or types of independent charter authorizers could work in Illinois?

The Task Force explored two different entities that could serve as alternate authorizers: the concept of an independent state public charter school commission and institutions of higher education.

Independent Charter School Commission

In order to better understand the structure and functions of an exemplary independent state-level agency that serves as an authorizer, the Task Force invited a guest speaker to present, Alex Medler, former chairman of the Board of the Colorado Charter Schools Institute.

Before the Colorado Charter Schools Institute was created, many districts in Colorado were not interested in authorizing charter schools. As a result, districts denied many applications, which were then appealed to the state education agency. If these denials were reversed, the responsibility for authorizing was returned to the local school district. In these cases, the charter schools typically had little leverage in negotiating their contract with the district. Consequently, both charter school leaders and district administrators were unhappy. In addition, there was not adequate capacity at the state education agency to review the appeals that were coming to the state. To address these issues, the Colorado legislature created the Colorado Charter Schools Institute in 2004.²

Under the 2004 legislation, Colorado districts must apply to the state board of education to maintain “exclusive authority” to authorize charter schools in their districts. The Institute only has the power to authorize charter schools in districts where the state board did not grant “exclusive authority” to districts or in districts in which the district leaders encourage applicants to apply directly to the Institute. In addition to authorizing schools statewide, the Institute also develops model practices for all authorizers (e.g. Requests for Proposals and contracts). These models are used by most districts in the state because if they do not perform as authorizers, they will lose their exclusive authority to authorize. Districts in Colorado can also contract with the Institute or a third party to run the charter school application process and then either the district or the Institute can authorize after the charter schools are approved. Mr. Medler further mentioned that the creation of the Institute was a positive development because districts that feared losing their exclusive authority changed their behavior and began to follow the Institute’s model of high-quality authorizing.

The Task Force generally saw merit in the concept of a statewide public charter school commission in Illinois that would incorporate some of the principles from the Colorado model. Several members of the Task Force strongly supported the Colorado model in order to provide

² The full text of the Colorado charter school law is available at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/chact.htm>

charter school applicants in Illinois with an additional authorizer option and to strengthen the quality of authorization throughout the state. In order to respect local control, though, the Task Force, after much debate, came to the consensus that charter school applicants should always first apply to the district. This practice is different than that of Colorado, and better approximates the practice currently used in Idaho.³ Under the Idaho model, for each charter school application, the district would choose to deny the charter school application, approve it, or defer to the statewide public charter school commission. If the application is approved, the charter school would be authorized by the LEA. If the application is denied or deferred by the district, the charter school applicant would take their application to the statewide public charter school commission. If the application is approved by the commission, the quasi-independent statewide public charter school commission would become the authorizer for the charter school.

Mr. Ziebarth provided the Task Force with an analysis of how statewide charter authorizers in other states interact with the respective state's board or department of education:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Arizona | The Arizona State Charter School Board approves charters independently of the Arizona State Board of Education. |
| Colorado | The Colorado Charter School Institute approves charters independently of the Colorado State Board of Education. |
| District of Columbia | The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board approves charters independently of the District of Columbia State Board of Education. |
| Georgia | <p>There are two important policies to note regarding the Georgia Charter Schools Commission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>First</i>, a petitioner for a Georgia Charter Schools Commission charter school must submit a petition to the local board of education in which the school is to be located and to each local school system from which the charter school plans to enroll students prior to or concurrently with a corresponding petition to the Georgia Charter Schools Commission unless the proposed charter school plans to enroll students from five or more counties. The Georgia Charter Schools Commission must not act on the petition until the local board of education or local boards of education have had the opportunity to approve or deny the petition. • <i>Second</i>, the state board of education may overrule the approval, denial, renewal, nonrenewal, or termination of a charter school approved by the Georgia Charter Schools Commission within 60 days of such decision upon a vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the state board. |
| Hawaii | The Hawaii Charter School Review Panel approves charters independently of the Hawaii State Board of Education. |
| Idaho | The Idaho Public Charter School Commission approves charters |

³ The full text of the Idaho charter school law is available at:
<http://www.sde.idaho.gov/CharterSchools/docs/lawsandreg/CS%20Idaho%20Statute.pdf>

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| | independently of the Idaho State Board of Education. In Idaho, however, a petition to establish a new public charter school must first be submitted to the local board of trustees. The local board of trustees may consider the petition and approve the charter, consider the petition and deny the charter, or refer the petition to the Idaho Public Charter School Commission. If the petitioners and the local board of trustees have not reached mutual agreement on the provisions of the charter within 60 days from the date the charter petition is received, the petitioners may withdraw their petition from the local board of trustees and may submit it to the Idaho Public Charter School Commission. The Idaho Public Charter School Commission may either consider the petition and approve the charter or consider the petition and deny the charter. |
| South Carolina | The South Carolina Public Charter School District approves charters independently of the South Carolina State Board of Education. In South Carolina, however, an applicant must first submit an application to the South Carolina Charter School Advisory Committee, who determines whether the application is in compliance. If so, the application is forwarded to the authorizer chosen by the school (either the local school district or the South Carolina Public Charter School District), who then determines whether or not to approve the application. |
| Utah | The Utah State Charter School Board approves charters, subject to Utah State Board of Education approval. |

The Task Force nevertheless favored a commission that would be closely connected and accountable to the State Board of Education—analogue to Illinois’ State Teacher Certification Board. As is the case now, the State Board of Education would still be required to certify all charter schools, whether the authorizer is the local school district or the quasi-independent commission.

With respect to the composition of any such quasi-independent commission, the Task Force believes the Illinois General Assembly should consider: representation from higher education (see next subsection below), representatives from public education, an odd number of members, staggered terms, and members who represent both political parties and have a breadth of experience and expertise that is well-suited to the commission’s work. The members of the commission should be unbiased, fair, and committed to high-quality authorization practices.

Further, it would be preferable from a State budget perspective for the commission to receive a start-up grant from private foundations and to withhold a percentage of the per-pupil funding from the schools it authorizes to support its on-going operations costs (e.g., 3%), rather than simply including administrative dollars for such a commission in ISBE’s standard personnel line item.

Higher Education Institutions

In order to better understand the structure and functions of an exemplary institution of higher education that serves as an authorizer, the Task Force invited a guest speaker to present, Cynthia Proctor, Director of Public Affairs for the Charter Schools Institute at the State University of New York (SUNY). In New York, three types of organizations can authorize charter schools – the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York, the New York State Board of Regents (the state education agency) and local boards of education. Only two school districts in the state, New York City and Buffalo, currently authorize charters. Although SUNY has 64 campuses, only the SUNY Board of Trustees serves as an authorizer. Ms. Proctor noted that multiple authorizers have been a benefit in New York because they provide applicants with a choice of authorizer.

After learning from the SUNY example, Dr. Bette Bergeron of Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, worked with fellow deans of colleges of education from public universities in Illinois to develop four options related to charter school authorization:

- No involvement;
- Each university authorizing separately;
- A representative from at least one of the universities serving as a voice for higher education on a statewide authorizing body; and
- A center, through which all of the public universities would collaboratively serve as a charter schools authorizer.

The consensus among the deans was the fourth option—the center, through which all of the public universities would collaboratively serve as a charter school authorizer. A summary of higher education’s recommendation is attached as Appendix E.

On behalf of the deans, Dr. Bergeron stated that this option would be advantageous because it would enhance P-20 connections in Illinois, provide opportunities for universities to share best practices, and take advantage of the geographic distribution of universities as well as the existing infrastructure and research capabilities that are housed within the universities. The center would require start-up funding from the State, but could be self-supporting after that initial funding if they received an authorizing fee from their charter schools.

The Task Force was intrigued by this option, and very complimentary of Dr. Bergeron’s efforts to quickly work with public deans to develop a position and proposal. Task Force members did, however, express multiple concerns. First, in the SUNY example, one institution, the SUNY Board of Trustees, serves as the authorizer representing higher education. Given that public universities in Illinois are accountable to multiple boards, it will be difficult to create one authorizing agency that represents all public institutions of higher education. Second, there were questions as to how the universities would address the critical issue of local control in Illinois to ensure that school district leaders would have significant input into any decision related to a charter school that would be located in their district. Third, authorizing charter schools is a unique area of expertise and there were questions as to whether universities in Illinois currently have the experience and expertise necessary to engage in high-quality authorization statewide.

The Task Force members nevertheless did feel strongly that, should the General Assembly establish an independent statewide charter school commission, it would be critical that higher education be represented on such commission.

What amount of funding is necessary to best ensure success and how will that funding mechanism affect the school districts of residence of students choosing to attend the charter school?

If the General Assembly chooses to establish a statewide public charter school commission, there would need to be a significant commitment from the State to ensure the infrastructure and human and financial resources necessary to conduct a high-quality authorization process. This involves three important components:

- First, based on an estimate of the experience in Colorado, start-up funding for the commission would be, at a minimum, \$300,000 over two years. This funding may come from the State or from private sources.
- Second, the State should develop a funding formula to provide for on-going operating costs. Appropriate levels of long-term funding should be determined based on both the number of applications that the authorizer might expect to receive and the capacity that is needed to monitor schools, hold them accountable, and conduct a high-quality, transparent and objective renewal process. This funding should come from a percentage of the operating budget of charter schools (e.g., 3%).
- Third, the State will also have to determine how funding flows to the charter schools that are authorized by the statewide public charter school commission. For example, in Colorado the state portion of the per-pupil revenue follows the student from the traditional public school to the state-authorized public charter school. The local portion of the per-pupil revenue stays with the traditional public school. To ensure that the state-authorized charter school receives an equivalent amount of the local portion, the state also reduces its allocation of state funds to each district sending students to a state-authorized charter school in an amount equal to the local portion.

Appendix A

Illinois State Board of Education Independent Charter School Authorizer Task Force Members

| Name | Organization |
|---|---|
| Michael Bartlett | Illinois Association of School Boards |
| Clarice Berry | Chicago Principals and Administrators Association |
| Representative William Burns | Illinois General Assembly |
| Traci Cobb-Evans | Chicago Teachers Union |
| Sean Denney | Illinois Education Association |
| Nicole Gales | Springfield Ball Charter School |
| Jaime Guzman | Office of New Schools - Chicago Public Schools |
| Collin Hitt | Illinois Policy Institute |
| Dea Meyer | Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago |
| Laurie Preece | Rockford Charter Schools Initiative |
| <i>Co-chair:</i> Darren Reisberg | Illinois State Board of Education |
| Greg Richmond | National Association of Charter School Authorizers |
| <i>Co-chair:</i> Senator Heather Steans | Illinois General Assembly |
| Paul Swanstrom | Superintendent, Joliet Township High School District 204; Member, Board of Directors, Illinois Association of School Administrators; Chair, High School District Organization |
| Sharon Teefey | Illinois Federation of Teachers |
| Todd Ziebarth | National Alliance for Public Charter Schools |

Appendix B

List of States and Authorizers in Each State

| State | Authorizers | State | Authorizers |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Alaska | LEA | Minnesota | LEA, RIA, SEA, HEI, NFP |
| Arizona | LEA, ICB, SEA | Missouri | LEA, SEA, HEI |
| Arkansas | SEA | Nevada | LEA, SEA |
| California | LEA, RIA, SEA | New Hampshire | LEA, SEA |
| Colorado | LEA, ICB | New Jersey | SEA |
| Connecticut | LEA, SEA | New Mexico | LEA, SEA |
| Delaware | LEA, SEA | New York | LEA, SEA, HEI |
| DC | LEA, ICB | North Carolina | SEA, LEA, HEI |
| Florida | LEA | Ohio | LEA, RIA, HEI, NFP |
| Georgia | LEA, ICB | Oklahoma | LEA, HEI |
| Hawaii | SEA | Oregon | LEA, SEA |
| Idaho | LEA, ICB | Pennsylvania | LEA, SEA |
| Illinois | LEA | Rhode Island | SEA |
| Indiana | LEA, HEI, MUN | South Carolina | LEA, ICB |
| Iowa | LEA | Tennessee | LEA |
| Kansas | LEA | Texas | LEA, SEA, HEI |
| Louisiana | LEA, SEA | Utah | LEA, ICB |
| Maryland | LEA, SEA | Virginia | LEA |
| Massachusetts | SEA | Wisconsin | LEA, HEI, MUN |
| Michigan | LEA, RIA, HEI | Wyoming | LEA |

Key:

LEA: Local Education Agency
RIA: Regional/Intermediate Agency
SEA: State Education Agency
ICB: Independent Chartering Board
HEI: Higher Education Institution
MUN: Municipal Office
NFP: Not-For-Profit Organization

Source: National Association of Charter School Authorizers. (2009). *Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing*. Retrieved February 10, 2010 from:
http://www.qualitycharters.org/files/public/Principles_and_Standards_2009.pdf

Appendix C

Independent Charter School Authorizer Task Force Minority Report

Compliments are certainly due to Senator Heather Steans and Darren Reisberg, co-chairs of this task force, for the efficient and collaborative manner in which the business of the task force was conducted. It was apparent that they were invested in hearing from all participants their thoughts, experiences and convictions regarding charter schools and the authorization process in place in Illinois and what, if any, improvements could be instituted in this process.

The purpose of this paper is to emphasize points made during the task force process that we believe the General Assembly must consider in order to move this issue forward in a way that ultimately benefits all students in the state of Illinois while maintaining a rational focus on the issue of local control.

We recognize the opinion that charter schools have the potential to provide a platform for innovative pedagogy when free from some of the restrictions binding the public school systems in Illinois. We welcome the potential of the development of new instructional strategies that may emerge from a locally authorized charter school. Furthermore, it was instructive to review and discuss the charter authorized processes utilized in other states and to gain greater understanding as Illinois moves forward in the consideration and implementation of the charter school option. However, we find it necessary to restate and emphasize the points we addressed during the deliberations of the task force.

Specifically, we will address the concepts of local control, an analysis of authorizer past practice/process and recommendations for authorizer oversight.

At its core, the alternative authorizer discussion revolves around a local control debate. All charter school applicants must seek approval from a local school board to establish a charter school. As locally-elected officials, school board members are expected to have a firm grasp on the issues and challenges facing their community on a daily basis. If a local school board chooses not to approve a charter school application, the applicant then has the option of appealing to the State Board of Education. If the State Board of Education approves the application, then the State Board of Education takes over oversight responsibilities of the charter school. Deciding whether or not to accept a charter school application is precisely the type of decision that school boards are elected to make. It is our concern that an independent charter school authorizer could be used to usurp essential responsibilities that are expected of locally-elected school boards and the expertise of their staff. Further, the local school board affords the local school community a voice in the charter school application discussion. If, for any reason, a school board is not properly representing local taxpayer and community sentiment surrounding charter school applications, then the community will have an opportunity to elect new school board members who share their viewpoints. There are a number of good reasons why a community could be opposed to a charter school application, not the least of which is the diversion of financial support for programming in the school district to support the creation of a new school. While

some believe an outside, authorizing authority would provide a better assessment of the reasons a charter application would be approved or denied, we disagree and believe that not only do school boards and administrators possess the knowledge to develop and run schools, it's what we do. We strongly believe they have the analytical capacity to assess the viability of a proposed charter school for their community. This is validated in school district processes utilized to evaluate charter proposals to date.

It became obvious from ongoing presentations and discussions regarding the success of charters that they thrive and provide viable alternative environments for learning success when the community, school district and charter applicant work in consort. Probably the best example of this collaboration is Chicago Public Schools. Many charters thrive in Chicago, not solely because an independent authorizing entity is employed, but because the elements identified above support each other. Renaissance 2010, the quasi-independent authorizer providing services to the Chicago Public Schools, reported that they employ a system of review of charter applications that takes into account community input as well as a rigorous review of the viability of the application. Chicago has a different school district structure from the rest of Illinois. We believe that where collaboration from the community, the school district and the Charter occurs, charters will proliferate.

As noted in the task force report, current Illinois law provides for an appeal process through the Illinois State Board of Education. This appeal process allows the State Board the right to reverse a local education agency's denial of a charter school application if the State Board finds that it meets the statutory requirements and is in the best interest of students. This process has effectively served Illinois and resulted in a charter school sector in which charter schools have generally been supported by their communities and have been relatively successful in offering quality choices to students and families.

We recognize that during the task force discussions, concerns were raised about the state agency having the capacity to perform this duty effectively. Compounding this situation is the recent expansion of the number of charter schools available in the State of Illinois, the possibility of additional appeals due to the increased number of charters and state budget constraints. While we recognize these as substantial concerns, we would err if we do not acknowledge the expertise of the state agency on behalf of all public school students throughout the state. Furthermore, it is incumbent upon us to recommend that capacity be built within the state education agency to address their concerns and provide the necessary resources to support potential charter school appeals. We urge that a dedicated line-item of funding be established to support the state education agency's ability to provide a viable appeal process. We strongly believe that enhancing Illinois' current structure ensures accountability to schools, students and communities and provides for a quality authorization process.

We suggest that policymakers should move cautiously when considering policies which are intended to open charter schools in communities across the state, and we feel it is incumbent on the legislature and the governor to require a rigorous approval process, strong regulatory oversight and a procedure to ensure educator, community and parental input. It is much harder for authorizers or the state to close charter schools after they have been opened, and high

standards at the front end and throughout the process are critical to ensure that Illinois' charter schools are strong performers.

Dr. Gary Miron from Western Michigan University put it succinctly in his remarks to the Task Force: "Why would you want to change the system of creating charters in Illinois? Illinois' system is not broken." Dr. Miron participated in a study of the charter school system in Illinois. The study has never been released by the Illinois State Board of Education.

As we stated at the beginning of this paper, we feel that the task force process was fairly and efficiently conducted. The co-chairs encouraged the gathering and review of information, experiences, thoughts and concerns regarding the current process of charter school authorization in Illinois. However, we feel that we would be remiss in our collective responsibilities if we did not bring to your attention and emphasize the importance of local control and the viability of continuing oversight of the charter school process through the State Board of Education with appropriate line-item funding for associated costs.

We ask that the General Assembly clearly see the importance of respecting the local board of education to review and implement programs that directly contribute to the growth and strength of the communities they serve. We further hope that the General Assembly will see the wisdom in providing adequate resources to the State Board of Education to serve as an independent reviewer of the charter school authorization process instead of the establishment of another separate agency which would require greater resources for start-up and oversight.

We felt it was important to share actual experiences from school districts reflecting the due diligence employed in review of charter applications. Below are responses (see accompanying chart) received delineating processes utilized by school districts outside Chicago to review charter school applications. While only four examples are shared here, the rigorous attention to statutory requirements, thorough review by both boards of education and school district staff and inclusion of the community shown here should allay perceptions that school districts are dismissing charter school creation without proper review. In addition, it should also show that school districts not only have the capacity to review applications but are uniquely equipped with the expertise to guard against the creation of schools that don't have the elements necessary to provide a proper learning environment.

Respectfully submitted,

Chicago Teachers Union
Illinois Association of School Administrators
Illinois Association of School Boards
Illinois Education Association
Illinois Federation of Teachers
High School District Organization

| School District | Charter Proposed | Review Process | Reasons for Denial | Application Generation | Additional Comment |
|---------------------|---|--|---|---|--|
| Champaign CUSD 4 | (2007) Barack Obama Leadership Academy Charter School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The proposal was reviewed by teachers, principals and the leadership team with members from curriculum, finance, human resources and student services. ➤ The proposal was also presented at a public meeting of the Board of Education. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The curriculum offered less than currently available in the public schools. ➤ No enrichment, including arts instruction, was available. ➤ Any proposed enrichment activities were required to be paid by the student. ➤ The staffing ratio indicated larger class size than public school, while small class size was cited as an advantage of the charter school. ➤ Teacher salaries were too low to attract master teachers. ➤ No ESL or bilingual services were offered, although the proposal stated that the school would reflect the District's student demographic. We have a large ELL population. ➤ Technology infrastructure was not addressed. ➤ There was no evidence of sound financial planning. For example, there was no provision for routine items such as library materials, unemployment insurance, criminal background checks or services for students with disabilities. | A district employee of two years made the proposal. She left the city the following year. | The District continually evaluates the needs of non-traditional learners. This is the second year of our alternative high school. Almost 40 students who were at risk of not graduating have earned their diplomas through this program. |
| Belleville THSD 201 | Midwest Partnership Through Academic Excellence | Reviewed the proposal internally and with our attorney | <p>We denied the charter application for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical plant ➤ Economic soundness of the proposal | Proposed from outside of our community. The proposed purpose would not | The ISBE reviewed the charter proposal and identified areas of noncompliance with the Illinois Charter Schools |

| School District | Charter Proposed | Review Process | Reasons for Denial | Application Generation | Additional Comment |
|---------------------|--|---|---|---|--|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Governance and operation of the charter school ➤ Community support ➤ Likelihood of success | have served our population and applicant did not pretend that it would. | Law: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inadequate special education requirements ➤ Inadequate curriculum ➤ Lack of a clear plan for assessing school and student performance and reporting progress in measurable terms ➤ Lack of sufficient proof of insurance coverage. |
| Bremen District 228 | (2009) South Suburban Academy Charter School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The proposal was presented to the School Board on May 12, 2009. [The superintendent asked the Board and administration to take diligent notes and to consider two questions: 1) Does the charter school offer a viable alternative to what students are offered in our district, and 2) If the program does offer a viable alternative, what would be the impact of supporting the charter school in our community.] Questions and comments were allowed, but responses would be delivered at a | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There were concerns for academically at-risk students for college with the plan, how would students be motivated, what would be the transition strategies? There was no curriculum plan for years 2-4. The proposal did not identify what technology would be used, beyond computers. It stressed exposure of students to business-related courses, yet a part-time business teacher would not have been hired until year three. ➤ Concerns were raised in the areas of per capita revenue, teachers' salary budget, loss of monies for District 228 in the areas of General State Aid, fundraising efforts, start-up capital, noting year one projects over a \$770,500 deficit, and unrealistic figures in the areas of health insurance, janitorial supplies, | This proposal was received from outside of our community (for the south suburbs). | |

| School District | Charter Proposed | Review Process | Reasons for Denial | Application Generation | Additional Comment |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------|
| | | <p>later date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Following May 12, the administrative team worked to gather information, conduct research, and gather the questions and comments from the Board. The school attorney was also asked to review the proposal. In the meantime, a list of questions was compiled and forwarded to the charter school. They provided responses in writing on May 26. ➤ The Board met again on May 26, 2009. The school attorney and the administration provided an evaluation of the proposal. | <p>utilities, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Legal concerns included the proposed site, employees and employment terms, liability and applicable insurance, transportation, intergovernmental agreements between the charter school and other possible districts, and the nature and extent of community involvement in the governance and operation of the Charter School (i.e., police, fire, etc.). | | |
| Joliet THSD 204 | (2009) Joliet Academy Charter School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consulted the provisions of the <i>School Code</i> and proceeded to review the application including applicable school district staff and school board attorney. ➤ Held a separate hearing of the Board of Education for community input and full review of the application. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proposed facility was not able to accommodate handicapped students. ➤ Proposal had no plan for transportation of low income and at-risk pupils. ➤ Proposal had no plan for displaced teachers or students. ➤ Contained no provisions for insurance and legal liabilities. ➤ Provided insufficient time to accomplish curriculum goals. ➤ Proposal failed to address requirements to address violations of contract. ➤ Proposal contained no plan for pupil | Charter application was generated from interests outside the community in an attempt to address perceived community concerns. | |

| School District | Charter Proposed | Review Process | Reasons for Denial | Application Generation | Additional Comment |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------|--|------------------------|--------------------|
| | | | <p>performance standards and no timeline for assessment of standards.</p> <p>➤ Proposal lacked evidence of economic soundness.</p> <p>➤ Proposal contained no outline of a governing body.</p> | | |

Appendix D

Charter Approvals, Denials, Disapprovals and Non-Renewals in Illinois

A list of approved charter schools that are operating in 2009-2010 in Illinois is available at:
http://www.isbe.net/charter/pdf/charter_schools.pdf

| Year | Received | Charter School Name | District | District Action | ISBE Disposition | Status |
|------|----------|--|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 1996 | I-96 | Peoria Alternative Charter School | Peoria 150 | Granted | Certified 7/7/96 | Charter not renewed at end of initial term-CLOSED |
| 1997 | 97 | SIU East St. Louis Charter School | E. St. Louis 189 | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Centreville/Fairmont City Charter School | E. St. Louis 189 | Denied | Remanded to district on Appeal | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Thomas Jefferson Charter School | 11 suburban districts | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Acorn Charter School (Nuestra America) | Chicago | granted | Certified 6/26/97 | Charter not renewed at end of initial term - CLOSED |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Chicago Preparatory Charter High School | Chicago | granted | Certified 6/26/97 | Charter revoked by CPS 9/22/99 - CLOSED |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Student Builders Charter School | Chicago | granted | | Charter revoked by CPS 12/97 |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | 12th Street Charter Elementary School | Chicago | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | I.S.I.S. Charter School (QEI) | Chicago | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Future Commons Charter School | Chicago | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Charter School for Families | Chicago | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | West Academy Charter HS | Chicago | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | IL Council for College Attendance | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | IAM II Charter Senior High School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | South Central Comm. Services | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Creative Education Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Willis Thomas Academy Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | A Chance for Children Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | DePaul University Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Pioneer Accelerated Learning Acad | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Metropolitan Preparatory Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Community Academy of Learners | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | PLAID Academy West Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | PACT Charter High School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Westside Cultural Arts Council Charter Sch | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Chicago Advantages Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Ada-Curt Tech Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Roseland Community Prep Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Great Builders of Cities Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Near-South Community Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Aspira's Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Uhlich/Chicago Commons Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |

| | | | | | | |
|------|------------|---|-----------------------|---------|--------------------------|--|
| 1997 | Jan-97 | MCC/Charter School to Work Academy | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Olisa Vocational Charter High School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jan-97 | Charter School of MUNA | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jun-97 | Thomas Jefferson Charter School | 3 suburban districts | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 1997 | Jun-97 | New Hope Charter School | 11 suburban districts | Denied | | |
| 1997 | 6/24/1997 | Alliance Charter School | Edwardsville 7 | Denied | | |
| 1997 | Jul-97 | Prairie Commons Charter School | 2 suburban districts | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 1997 | 10/23/1997 | Alliance Charter School | Edwardsville 7 | Denied | | |
| 1997 | 12/23/1997 | Liberty Hall Charter School | Libertyville 70 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 1997 | 12/29/1997 | Alliance Charter School | Edwardsville 7 | Denied | | |
| 1997 | 12/29/1997 | Mission with a Vision Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | 12/29/1997 | Sia Charter School for Human Development | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | 12/29/1997 | Edge/Up Alternatives Inc. | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | 12/29/1997 | The Right Angle Educational Fdn | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | 12/29/1997 | Betty Shabazz International Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | 12/29/1997 | Academy of Arts, Science & Math | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | 12/29/1997 | Greater West Town Comm Dev. Project | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | 12/29/1997 | Marantha Charter School (M&M Ed Service) | Chicago | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 1997 | 12/29/1997 | The Bridge Charter School (SE Asia Center) | Chicago | Denied | Appeal to ISBE withdrawn | |
| 1997 | 12/29/1997 | International Renewal Institute | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | 12/29/1997 | Mandela/King Charter School (Hamilton Life) | Chicago | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 1997 | 12/29/1997 | New Vision Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 1997 | 12/29/1997 | Great Builders of Cities Charter School | Chicago | granted | | Charter revoked by CPS |
| 1997 | 12/29/1997 | Golden Apple Charter School | Chicago | granted | | Charter revoked by CPS 8/20/99 |
| 1998 | 3/30/1998 | Thomas Jefferson Charter School | CCSD 59 | Denied | Certified 6/18/98 | Charter not renewed at end of initial term - CLOSED |
| 1998 | 4/1/1998 | Alliance Charter School | Edwardsville 7 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 1998 | 12/21/1998 | Evanston Advantage Charter School | Evanston 65 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 1998 | 12/28/1998 | Sin Fronteras Charter School | Evanston 65 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 1999 | 7/20/1999 | YouthBuild Rockford Charter School | Rockford 205 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2000 | 1/3/2000 | The Chicago Urban League Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2000 | 1/3/2000 | Horizon Math and Science | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2000 | 1/3/2000 | Washington Park Academy Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2000 | 1/3/2000 | Techiya Institute Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2000 | 1/3/2000 | Community Tech Institute Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2000 | 1/3/2000 | Chicago Children's Choir Academy | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2000 | 3/2/2000 | Governors State University Charter School | Crete-Monee 201U | granted | Certified | Charter revoked by Crete-Monee, decision upheld by ISBE on Appeal and by court on judicial review - CLOSED |
| 2000 | 4/24/2000 | Tomorrow's Builders Charter School | E. St. Louis 189 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2000 | 4/24/2000 | Szygy Charter School | Belleville 201 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2000 | 6/8/2000 | Visional Academy Charter School | Alton 11 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |

| | | | | | | |
|------|------------|--|--------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|---|
| 2000 | 6/26/2000 | KEYS Charter School | Edwardsville 7 | granted | Certified | Charter terminated at end of 2002-2003 school year by mutual agreement between school and district - CLOSED |
| 2000 | 7/5/2000 | E. St. Louis Good Schools for All | E. St. Louis 189 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2000 | 6/14/2000 | Horizon Math and Science | Maywood et al 89 | Denied | | |
| 2001 | 1/2/2001 | Englewood Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2001 | 1/2/2001 | Genesis Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2001 | 1/2/2001 | Ben Carson's Charter School for the Middle Child | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2001 | 1/2/2001 | Chicago Progressive Academic Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2001 | 1/2/2001 | Educational Institute & Learning Academy | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2001 | 1/2/2001 | Richard Milburn Alternative HS Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2001 | 1/2/2001 | West Town Academy Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2001 | 1/2/2001 | Horizon Math and Science | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2001 | 1/2/2001 | Learning Success Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2001 | 1/2/2001 | Passages Charter School | Chicago | granted | | Withdrawn, became part of Global Village - see 2001-16 |
| 2001 | 1/2/2001 | Charter School of the Chicago Children's Choir | Chicago | granted | | Withdrawn - became part of Global Village - see 2001-16 |
| 2001 | 6/27/2001 | Tomorrow's Builders Charter School | E. St. Louis 189 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2001 | 8/2/2001 | Global Village Charter School | Chicago | granted | Certified 9/4/01 | Charter terminated at end of 2002-2003 school year by mutual agreement between school and district - CLOSED |
| 2001 | 9/10/2001 | YouthBuild Rockford Charter School | Rockford 205 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | ISBE's decision upheld by Supreme Court of Illinois. |
| 2002 | 4/16/2002 | Champaign-Urbana Charter School | Champaign 116 & Urbana 4 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2002 | 7/22/2002 | Children's Academy Charter School | Cahokia 187 | referendum | proposal to ISBE Denied | First "referendum" proposal received by ISBE |
| 2003 | 2/3/2003 | Thomas Jefferson Charter School | ISBE Charter | ISBE Charter | ISBE declined to renew | Charter not renewed at end of initial term - CLOSED |
| 2003 | 6/16/2003 | Ch-SALI Charter School | Elgin U-46 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2003 | 10/14/2003 | Aurora Academic-Technology Charter School | Aurora 131 | Denied | | |
| 2003 | 10/17/2003 | Dynamic Learning Charter School | Mattoon 2 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2003 | 12/2/2003 | Donald Edwin Garrett Charter School | Madison/Alton/Venice | Denied | | |
| 2003 | 12/29/2003 | Academy of Business & Entrepreneurship | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2003 | 12/29/2003 | Boys Choir of Chicago Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2003 | 12/29/2003 | The Bridge International Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2003 | 12/29/2003 | Chicago Career Center Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2003 | 12/29/2003 | Excel Fine Arts Secondary & College Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2003 | 12/29/2003 | Expansions Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2003 | 12/29/2003 | Learning Success Vocational Charter Sch | Chicago | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2003 | 12/29/2003 | LuMar Technology & Communications | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2003 | 12/29/2003 | Native Foundations Charter High School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2003 | 12/29/2003 | Quest Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2003 | 12/29/2003 | Two Dimensions Charter School at Chicago | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2003 | 12/29/2003 | Urban Prep Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2003 | 12/29/2003 | Voices and Visions Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2003 | 12/29/2003 | WEUO Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |

| | | | | | | |
|------|------------|--|--|------------|-----------------------|--|
| 2004 | 2/26/2004 | Ch-SALI Charter School | Elgin U-46 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2004 | 3/16/2004 | East St. Louis Preparatory Charter School | E. St. Louis 189 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2004 | 4/5/2004 | Aurora Academic-Technology Charter School | Aurora 131 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2004 | 4/30/2004 | Children's Academy Charter School | Cahokia 187 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2004 | 7/26/2004 | George Marshall Academy Charter School | Lake Bluff (Dist. 65); Lake Forest (Dist. 67); Oak Grove (Dist. 68); Libertyville (Dist. 70); Rondout (Dist. 72); Hawthorne (Dist. 73); Mundelein (Dist. 75); Diamond Lake (Dist. 76); Kildeer Countryside CCSD (Dist. 96); Aptakisic-Tripp (Dist. 102); Lincolnshire-Prairie View (Dist. 103); Bannockburn (Dist. 106); Deerfield (Dist. 109); North Shore (Dist. 112) and North Chicago (Dist. 187). | All Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2004 | 12/28/2004 | Talented Tenth Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2004 | 12/28/2004 | The Learning Center | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2004 | 12/28/2004 | The Bridge International Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2004 | 12/28/2004 | Southwest Youth Collaborative Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2004 | 12/28/2004 | Academy for Fine Arts Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2004 | 12/28/2004 | Global Language and Technology Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2004 | 12/28/2004 | Englewood Air Force Charter School, Calumet Air Force Charter School, Benjamin Wright Raymond Air Force Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2004 | 12/28/2004 | Urban Prep Charter Academy | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2004 | 12/28/2004 | Back of the Yards Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/7/2005 | Faulkner Classical Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/7/2005 | Ladders to Success Academy Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/7/2005 | Metropolitan Academy of Science Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 02/0/05 | Miracle Center for the Performing Arts | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/8/2005 | Chicago International Ralph Ellison | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/8/2005 | Richard Milburn Academy Charter High School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/14/2005 | Chicago's Image Schools Charter Elementary School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/14/2005 | Digital Generation Middle School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/14/2005 | Gateway to Learning Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/14/2005 | Greater Ashburn Community Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/14/2005 | Home of Life Tech Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/14/2005 | Gateway to Learning Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/14/2005 | The Learning Center Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/14/2005 | Nia-Quest Charter School Woodson | Chicago | Denied | | |

| | | | | | | |
|------|------------|---|---|--------|---|--|
| 2005 | 2/14/2005 | New Tarkington Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/14/2005 | Octavio Paz (amendment) | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/14/2005 | Perspectives Charter School (amendment) | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/14/2005 | Roseland Institute of Positive Development Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/14/2005 | Talented Tenth Charter High School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 2/14/2005 | Nia Quest (2 nd campus) | Chicago | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Withdrawn | |
| 2005 | 3/28/2005 | Kenny Dorham Performing Arts Charter School | Dolton District 148 | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 12/5/2005 | Chicago Community Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 12/5/2005 | Early College Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 12/5/2005 | Griffin Charter Academy | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 12/5/2005 | KIPP LEAD College Preparatory Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 12/5/2005 | The Miracle Center Performing Arts Charter School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 12/5/2005 | Richard Milburn Charter Academy | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2005 | 12/5/2005 | Roseland Community School | Chicago | Denied | | |
| 2006 | 1/17/2006 | Cahokia Charter School | Cahokia USC 187 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2006 | 8/25/2006 | Global Alliance Preparatory Charter School | CPS | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2007 | 1/16/2007 | Barack Obama Leadership Academy Charter School | Champaign CUSD 4 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2007 | 3/12/2007 | Crossroads Montessori K-8 Public Charter School | East St. Louis Dist. 189 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2008 | 4/7/2008 | South Suburban College Preparatory Charter School | Homewood-Flossmoor CHSD 233 | Denied | | |
| 2008 | 5/29/2008 | Harvey Brooks Academy Charter School | Joliet Township HS Dist 204 | Denied | | |
| 2008 | 5/30/2008 | Metro East School for Agriculture, Health & Applied Sciences Charter School | Brooklyn USD 188 | Denied | | |
| 2008 | 5/19/2008 | Metro East School for Agriculture, Health & Applied Sciences-Charter School | Brooklyn | Denied | | |
| 2008 | 5/19/2008 | Metro East School for Agriculture, Health & Applied Sciences-Charter School | Belleville 201; Cahokia 187; E St. Louis 189; | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2008 | 12/15/2008 | Chicago International Charter School | Waukegan CUSD 60 | Denied | | |
| 2009 | 2/9/2009 | Fl. Bowman Academy Charter School | Cahokia Unit School District 187 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | Circuit Court remanded back to ISBE for further proceedings for ISBE to make a full determination with findings of fact. |
| 2009 | 5/26/2009 | Joliet Academy Charter School | Joliet Township HS Dist. 204 | Denied | Appeal to ISBE Denied | |
| 2009 | 6/4/2009 | South Suburban Academy Charter School | Bremen Township HS Dist 228 | Denied | | |
| 2009 | 7/6/2009 | Greentek Career Academy Charter School | Rockford SD 205 | Denied | Appeal received 7-16-09. Request for additional information sent 9-14-09. | Appeal received 7-16-09. Request for additional information sent 9-14-09. |
| 2009 | 7/6/2009 | Sigma Beta Leadership Charter School | Rockford SD 105 | Denied | | |

Appendix E

University Center for Public Charter School Authorization (UCPCSA) *DRAFT PROPOSAL*

The Illinois Association of Public Deans of Colleges of Education (IAPDCE), representing each of the state's 12 public universities, is offering the following proposal for a state-wide Center that would serve communities across Illinois as an alternative authorizer for public charter schools. Currently, 11 states allow universities to authorize public charter schools. This proposal builds upon the experiences of these entities to develop a structure that is unique to Illinois and the needs of its constituents.

In order to be successful, charter school authorizers need the political will to authorize charters, adequate funding to support authorization, the infrastructure needed to carry out its tasks, the ability to maintain high standards, and the ability to collect and analyze student-level data. High-quality authorizers use data to inform decisions related to charter applications, school monitoring, and renewal. Through the direct involvement of each of the state's public universities, the proposed University Center for Public Charter School Authorization (UCPCSA) would offer the state the following distinct advantages⁴:

- Enhanced connections and interaction across the P-20 education continuum
- Existing network of P-12 partnerships and professional development sites within schools and districts
- Opportunities for sharing best practices as related to instruction, curriculum, leadership, and educator preparation
- Geographic distribution across the state of Illinois, therefore serving a broad and diverse range of the state's communities
- Existing infrastructures that can be supportive of the endeavor
- Access to expertise from across a wide spectrum of areas including curriculum, administration, budgeting, accounting, subject area content, institutional compliance, ADA
- Research capabilities that would allow for curricular innovation as well as the dissemination of best practices to a range of educational entities across the state
- Access to and expertise in successfully acquiring external grants to support the implementation of best practices across the authorized charter schools
- Expertise in data-driven decision-making
- Consistent mission and vision to support the public sector and enhance educational opportunities for all children in the state

⁴ Sources: Minutes from the Illinois State Board of Education Independent Charter School Authorizer Task Force dated 11/17/09, 11/10/09, 10/28/09; National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2009, June), *A New Model Law for Supporting The Growth of High-Quality Public Charter Schools*; National Association of Charter School Authorizers (2009, July), *Quality, Diversity and Choice: The Value of Multiple Charter Authorizing Options*.

UCPCSA Purpose

The primary function of the University Center for Public Charter School Authorization (UCPCSA) is to provide communities from across the state with an alternative to district-situated authorization for new public charter schools. It is intended to build upon the unique strengths that public institutions of higher education can offer to this enterprise. The distinct purposes of UCPCSA include the following:

- Focus on strengthening and enhancing P-20 connections and partnerships
- Investigation and dissemination of best practices related to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and leadership to benefit all public schools across the state
- Investigation and dissemination of best practices related to educator preparation
- Investigation and dissemination of best practices as related to charter school authorization, to be shared with district authorizers
- Procurement of external grants to support innovation in classrooms and schools
- Increased access to charter school authorization beyond the Chicago metropolitan region

UCPCSA Structure

Currently, there are 68 charter school sites in the Chicago School District and its “collar counties,” with only five charters located in downstate Illinois. One of the primary functions of the UCPCSA will be to provide service to the downstate regions in order to enhance the number of high-quality public charter schools in these underserved regions. This proposal also recognizes the high quality of work currently reflected in the Chicago Public Schools and its authorization process, therefore making it unnecessary at this time to provide Chicago with an alternative authorizer. By focusing on communities outside of the jurisdiction of CPS, families from a broader geographical area across the state of Illinois will be provided with increased options and access to charter school authorization.

The Center would be physically located at a public state university; universities would solicit applications to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for approval. It is anticipated that only one Center would be approved initially. However, others could be considered depending upon the growth of charter public schools across the state and the capacity of the Center to maintain high levels of quality and accountability in the authorization process. The Center would be accountable to ISBE, which would have the authority to revoke its ability to authorize upon formal review and a process to be jointly determined by ISBE and the UCPCSA.

The Center would consist of a full-time Director and adequate staff to perform its day-to-day functions (recommendations presented to the Task Force have included 16-18 staff members). The Director would report to and serve on the UCPCSA Board, which would have representatives from each of the 12 public institutions. Board members would be approved by the Illinois State School Superintendent. For each application that is received, a Community Team would be established that would consist of Board members whose institutions are in the geographic region of the proposed charter school as well as representatives from the community, teaching associations, business, and individuals whose expertise would provide assistance in the review of the application. Specific responsibilities of the UCPCSA Board and Community Teams are provided in the Table; a structural diagram for the UCPCSA is provided in the attached Figure.

UCPCSA Funding

The state would provide start-up funding in order to support the initial development of the Center. This would include hiring the Director and essential staff as well as a budget for commodities, travel, and initial equipment. The university that houses the Center would provide the space needed for offices. The goal for the Center, however, would be that this entity becomes self-sufficient through a minimal per pupil allocation from students at approved charters' (not to exceed 2%), grants, and private donations. Therefore, it is anticipated that the state's financial support would be diminished over time as charters are approved and grant funding is secured.

Table: Proposed UCPCSA Responsibilities

| Roles and Responsibilities | |
|--|--|
| <i>UCPCSA Board</i> | <i>UCPCSA Community Teams*</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop procedures for applications• Develop criteria for reviewing applications• Develop procedures & criteria for monitoring approved charters• Solicit applications• Screen & determine initial viability of applications• Provide recommendations for membership on Community Teams; serve on Community Teams• Make final decisions regarding approval, renewal, revocation• Execute final contracts• Research, implement, & disseminate best practices related to charter authorization procedures• Report & disseminate best practices related to curriculum, leadership, educator preparation• Develop annual reports for the state as required | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review applications• Conduct public meetings related to charter applications, renewal, & revocation• Conduct site/facility visits related to charter proposals• Make recommendations to the Board regarding approval, renewal, & revocation• Draft contracts• Monitor approved charter schools; provide reports to the Board <p><i>*Individual Teams would be developed for each viable charter application</i></p> |

Figure: UCPCSA Structure

