

# ILLINOIS STATE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

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## Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 24, 2019

The January 24, 2019 Commission Meeting of the Illinois State Charter School Commission was held at the Michael A. Bilandic Building, 160 North LaSalle Street in Chicago, Illinois.

Commission Chair, DeRonda Williams, called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm.

### I. Welcome & Introductions

Commissioner Williams conducted roll call. Commissioners Catherine Burns, Melissa Connelly, Bill Farmer, Carlos Perez, Troy Ratliff and David Feinberg were in attendance.

Also in attendance were Commission staff Shenita Johnson, Robbie Curry, Teresa Diaz and National Urban Fellows Davon Harris and Glomery Sierra.

The pledge of allegiance was recited by all.

### II. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Williams asked for a motion to approve the September 24<sup>th</sup> and December 18<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting minutes. After it was moved to approve and seconded, a vote was called and with a unanimous vote and no objections, the motion was passed to approve the September 24<sup>th</sup> and December 18<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting minutes.

### III. Public Participation

**Adam Dauksas-** (Attorney, Woodland School District 50) read a statement on behalf of Dr. Joy Swoboda who was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict. Statement included opposition to the renewal of Prairie Crossing Charter School, which emphasized that Woodland is the only choice for an equitable education.

**Chris Bobek-** (Associate Superintendent and Chief School Business, Woodland School District 50) urged the Commission to deny the renewal of Prairie Crossing Charter School. He stressed that monies that are being diverted to Prairie Crossing School should be used for at-risk students, which PCCS does not serve.

**Carla Little-** (Board President of Woodland School District 50) spoke in opposition of the renewal of Prairie Crossing Charter School citing that both ISBE and the Commission has ordered PCCS to close the gap on the school demographics in comparison to the host district, and still has failed to do so.

**James Petrungaro –** (Attorney, Woodland School District 50) spoke in opposition of the renewal of Prairie Crossing Charter School as he referenced the legal brief that was provided to Commissioners in December. He provided remarks from the prior renewal decision meeting where Commissioners were concerned that although a majority of students are from the Woodland district, the demographics of the Woodland students attending Prairie Crossing are

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not representative of the district. He also requested that the Commission reject the charter renewal, but if a renewal is granted, asked that it be limited to one (1) year, limit funding to 97% PCTC and freeze the enrollment cap. In addition, he provided a written statement from Lori Casey, Associate Superintendent from the Woodland School District. Lastly, he requested that the Commission authorize Woodland as a party to the charter renewal process, as an initial request was submitted to the Commission staff and denied.

**Terry Hall** – (Woodland Resident and Woodland School District Board Member) spoke in opposition of the renewal of Prairie Crossing Charter School. She provided historical context on how Prairie Crossing was opened twenty years ago and included testimony on how Prairie Crossing does not serve disadvantaged students.

**Nell Anen** – (Vice President, Prairie Crossing Board of Directors) spoke in support of the charter renewal of Prairie Crossing Charter School. On behalf of the board, she stated that the board is pleased with the school's academic performance and proud that last year, the school had its largest applicant pool ever. She added that over the next five (5) years, the board is committed to keeping student outreach a high priority and that they are also renewing the task force efforts to explore alternate transportation systems.

**Cafer Cengiz** – (Principal, Horizon Science Academy – McKinley Park) spoke in support of the material modification submitted to the Commission to increase its enrollment capacity.

**Anne Brown** – (Senior Manager, Illinois Network of Charter Schools) spoke in favor of the charter renewal for Prairie Crossing Charter School. She added that PCCS has been an extremely high-performing school, significantly outperforming the state and it also provides a highly desired innovative educational option for children in the district from which it draws.

Commissioner Williams thanked the public participants for their testimony.

#### IV. Report of the Chair

On behalf of the Commission, Commissioner Williams expressed her condolences on the recent passing of Commissioner Schuchart's father.

Williams provided a summary of the three (3) bills currently circulating in the Legislative General Assembly that proposes the elimination of the Commission and limit its appeal authority.

Lastly, Williams informed the Commissioners that the Commission recently published its Biennial Best Practice Report which provides guidance to local districts on authorizing practices geared to ensure access, autonomy and accountability. Copies of the report are available on the Commission's webpage.

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### **V. Report of the Operations Committee**

Commissioner Ratliff stated that the major takeaways at the most recent Committee meeting were that the Commission now serves more than 3,900 students and staff provided a status update on the FY19 budget. This concluded the report of the Operations Committee.

### **VI. Report of the Schools Committee**

Commissioner Farmer stated that on October 1<sup>st</sup>, Horizon Science Academy-McKinley Park and Southland College Prep filed material modification applications requesting increases to the school's enrollment cap. He added that later in the meeting, staff will be presenting its recommendation and the Commission will be asked to take action on the modifications.

As related to the 2017-18 annual performance reviews, Commissioners have received reports for the Commission schools. During the staff report, staff will be providing an overview of the portfolio performance.

Also discussed during the last Schools Committee meeting, was the State's new student growth model. Further discussions on student growth will be continued during upcoming Schools Committee meetings. This concluded the report of the Schools Committee.

### **VII. Report of the Executive Director/General Counsel**

Shenita Johnson started her report by wishing all a happy National School Choice Week, which is celebrated across the country.

#### Commissioner Conflicts of Interests

Prior to proceeding with the Executive Director's report, Johnson reported that there were no reported conflicts for the Prairie Crossing Charter renewal decision and no reported conflicts as related to appeals that will be presented for motion.

#### Prairie Crossing Charter School Renewal

Johnson responded to Mr. James Petrungaro's testimony regarding the request by Woodland to be joined as a party to the renewal. Johnson stated that staff reviewed the IL Charter Schools Law, review of the charter school agreement and consultation with an external counsel, which determined that the Commission does not have the authority to admit to these proceedings. Johnson added that only the Commission, as the authorizer and school are parties to the agreement.

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### Legislative Update

Johnson provided an update on the bills against the Commission that are being proposed. She added that the Commission schools have been invited to participate in discussions with the Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS) to develop a strategy in order to stay in front of these bills.

### Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Appeals

Johnson provided a brief summary on the appeals that were received by the Commission in late December/early January. Two appeals are for elementary schools: Moving Everest and Kwame Nkrumah. The other two appeals are for high schools: Intrinsic and Urban Prep West. Due to these appeals being either from existing schools or have existing schools, the Commission will be conducting site visits the following week, followed by public hearings.

Johnson asked that Commissioners review the calendar of events found in their meeting binder which includes public hearing dates, both Senate and House committee hearings, Commission Committee meetings and the March Commission meeting for their availability to attend these important events.

### School Closure Policy

Johnson provided a high level summary on the development of the school closure policy, focusing on the three main areas: transparency, communication and process for closure. Johnson stated that the first area of the closure policy is the evidentiary support for closure and the work that the Commission did by amending the accountability system in 2017 to adopt accountability actions and triggers. Johnson added that as related to stakeholder engagement, the Commission will collaborate with schools to engage the local community, including the local school district, on any action to close a school to make sure that students are placed in at least an equally or higher performing school. Lastly, Johnson stated that the timeline and process for closure relates to the wind-down of a school. One of the proposed components to the school closure policy is that schools approved by the Commission after 2016 will be required to develop an escrow account specifically to cover the cost of closure since these are costs that schools don't typically budget for on an annual basis. In closing, Johnson stated that future discussion would be had on the policy at the next Committee meetings.

### 2017-18 Annual Performance Reviews

Director of Portfolio Performance Robbie Curry provided a brief overview of the accountability actions based on the 2017-18 annual performances. Curry referenced the accountability status

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for the schools in the Commission's portfolio. He indicated that schools rated Outstanding will be showcased and asked to share best practices, schools rated as Concern and Deficient are required to update their strategic action plans and schools rated as Probation or Revocation are required to submit a remediation plan. Schools required to submit a remediation plan would be subject to increased monitoring around the benchmarks of the plan to improve instruction practices and academic outcomes.

### Material Modification Applications

Robbie Curry provided an update on the material modifications requests received from Southland College Prep and Horizon Science Academy McKinley Park. Curry provided academic highlights for both schools, which supports the staff recommendation to approve both material modifications.

That concluded the staff report.

Commissioner Williams thanked the staff for their report. Williams then asked to move forward with the first three action items on the agenda.

### Accept Staff Recommendation to Grant Material Modification Request of Horizon Science Academy McKinley Park

Commissioner Farmer made a motion to accept the staff's recommendation to grant the material modification of Horizon Science Academy McKinley Park for a three-year phased enrollment increase of up to 130 students. Commissioner Ratliff seconded the motion. Commissioner Williams turned it over to Commission staff to provide more details on the recommendation.

Johnson provided background on the school's academic performance, the fiscal impact on the host district and evidence of demand for school enrollment.

Commissioner Burns shared information from the school's public hearing. Commissioner Ratliff added that he visited the school specifically looking at its space utilization and came away very satisfied with the information that was provided and his observations on the space was sufficient.

With no other statements or questions, Commissioner Williams called a roll call vote. The motion passed with six (6) ayes and one (1) opposed.

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### Accept Staff Recommendation to Grant Material Modification Request of Southland College Preparatory Charter School

Commissioner Farmer made a motion to accept the staff's recommendation to grant the material modification of Southland College Prep for a two-year phased enrollment increase of up to 60 students. Commissioner Feinberg seconded the motion. Commissioner Williams turned it over to Commission staff to provide more details on the recommendation.

Johnson provided background on the school's academic performance, the fiscal impact on the host district and evidence of demand for school enrollment. Johnson added that Southland intends to build an addition onto its current facility to house a gymnasium. Since Southland buses their students at a site off-campus for physical education and sports, they plan to develop a facility that will alleviate some the classrooms that are currently used for administrative offices.

Commissioner Connelly shared information from the school's public hearing.

With no other statements or questions, Commissioner Williams called a roll call vote. The motion passed with six (6) ayes and one (1) opposed.

### Renew the Charter Agreement for Prairie Crossing Charter School for a term of Five (5) Years at 100% PCTC

Commissioner Williams made a motion to adopt the staff recommendation to renew the Charter Agreement for Prairie Crossing Charter School for a term of five (5) years at 100% PCTC. Commissioner Ratliff seconded the motion. Williams stated that presentations from the school and staff would then be heard.

Prairie Crossing Charter School Executive Director Geoff Deigan thanked the Commission for having their charter renewal on the agenda. Deigan provided highlights of the school, which included the school Meeting or exceeding performance standards, the school's student enrollment being at capacity, and the increased demand which is evidenced by its lottery pool of over 250 applications. Deigan added that the school has achieved many accolades including winning Blue and Green ribbon awards, named as the top charter school in Illinois by Niche ranking and being recently awarded the best K-12 green school in the nation by the US Green Building Council. Deigan also explained there is misconception that Prairie Crossing does not serve low-income students by stating that the school has increased their low-income percentage since its last renewal. To close, Deigan requested that on behalf of the 432

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Students, 230 parents, 89 staff and board members and 240 prospects on the waitlist, the Commission renew the charter for five (5) years at a minimum of 100% PCTC.

Shenita Johnson provided a summary of the renewal application process, which included an initial renewal findings report, school site visit, focus groups with parents, teachers and staff, interview with the board of directors and school leadership, public hearing and an email forum. Johnson explained that the IL Charter Schools Law lays out that decisions made by the Commission is based on a two-prong test, compliance and best interest. Second, the Statute sets upon the authorizer the burden to demonstrate whether a charter school failed to comply with the requirements of the law or whether the school failed to meet or make adequate progress. Third, the authorizer is required to demonstrate evidence in order to render a decision as to whether to renew or not renew.

Johnson added that the Commission staff found that there were no material violations or conditions of any of the procedures set forth by the Commission. Johnson reminded the Commissioners that on its last renewal in 2014, Prairie Crossing had two conditions: 1) to create an outreach plan to attract more educationally disadvantaged students and Prairie Crossing complied with that and developed an outreach plan that was approved by the Commission staff and 2) to establish consistent practice and policies for evaluation of their school leadership and the school has done that, which is measured through the organizational framework of the annual review.

Johnson further stated that Prairie Crossing met or exceeded 100% of the Commission's academic performance standards, for the last two (2) years. The school is the highest performing elementary school in the Commission's portfolio and for four (4) consecutive years the school has exceeded the State average on ELA and Math proficiency. The Evaluation team found that the school's Math performance has been stagnant over the charter term and that will be addressed in the staff's recommendation. As related to sub-groups, the school has improved performance. In the 2017-18 school year, all sub-groups were meeting or exceeding the State proficiency standards.

Johnson stated that Prairie Crossing has met the financial performance standards over the last four (4) years with the exception of one metric in 2014 and 2015; the explanation provided by the school was accepted as satisfactory.

Additionally, as it relates to a violation of any federal, state, local regulation from which the charter is not exempt; Johnson stated that the Commission has not received any complaints, other than those voiced today by the Woodland School District and at the public hearing. The

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Commission has not issued any adverse findings related to Prairie Crossing over the term of the charter.

Lastly, Johnson explained that the IL Charter Schools Law does not mandate school-wide student transportation. As a reference, the State's reimbursement for charter school transportation is limited. Johnson added that student transportation is one of the areas that the Commission will continue to work with Prairie Crossing; which is a part of the staff recommendation. Johnson added that a part of their supplemental renewal application, PCCS indicated plans to reconvene their task force as it relates to transportation and food service as well.

As related to compliance, Johnson stated that Prairie Crossing is in compliance with the IL Charter Schools Law.

Johnson reaffirmed the staff's recommendation that Prairie Crossing be renewed for a five year term at 100% PCTC with an enrollment increase to 444 students, which represents an additional 12 seats.

Johnson confirmed that the staff has set accountability targets and will require the school to develop a strategic plan specifically related to ensuring that the perception or misalignment with student access, recruitment, enrollment and retention are addressed and that those accountability targets are directly tied to the organizational performance framework to which the school is reviewed annually and the school is held accountable.

Johnson referenced the geographical map that the Woodland School District provided during public participation to demonstrate that Woodland serves more than 5,000 students who are housed in four school buildings, primarily in Gurnee and Great Lakes. In each of those buildings, there are more than 1,000 students in each of these building,

As related to the best interest findings, Johnson stated that the IL Charter Schools Law lays out preferences in which an authorizer is required to give preference to a charter school that is able to demonstrate:

- 1) Track record of rigorous academic performance: as noted, Prairie Crossing has outperformed it assigned school composite over the last four (4) consecutive years. As a reminder, the assigned school composite represents the schools that students currently enrolled at Prairie Crossing would be assigned to based on their home address.



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- 2) High levels of community support: a public hearing was held and an email forum was opened to collect comments and testimony, in favor of the renewal of Prairie Crossing Charter School.

Johnson added that Prairie Crossing has increased its population of at-risk or educationally disadvantaged students as the Commission addressed in 2014, and performance demonstrates that those populations are being served well. Specifically for Hispanic students, 76% are meeting or exceeding standards in ELA as compared to the top 10% of schools in the State are only at 52%. Also, Prairie Crossing serves 13% of students with IEPs and as related to low-income students, 60% of the school's low-income students are meeting State standards.

Johnson added that the Evaluation team reviewed the achievement gap between PCCS and the Woodland district. When compared to the district, the school's achievement gap in low-income and non-low-income students is 12% versus Woodland at 32%. Between white and Hispanic students, the achievement gap on ELA is 5% versus Woodland's 26%.

Johnson reminded the Commission that the statute defines at-risk as physical, emotional, socioeconomic, cultural factors, those factors that will influence a child to succeed in a conventional educational environment.

In conclusion, Johnson stated that as part of the staff recommendation, it is being requested that the school focus on student growth in Math at the subgroup grade level, classroom and individual student levels. In addition, it is being recommended that there are specific targets and goals set to address the perceived barriers for at-risk student populations and that those targets and goals will be tied to their accountability plan specifically in the organizational framework that currently measures enrollment, retention and recruitment of students.

That concluded the presentation by the Commission staff.

Commissioner Williams then asked if there were any questions or comments to the Commission staff or school presenters.

Commissioner Ratliff first commended the Commission staff on the in-depth staff recommendation report. Ratliff asked the staff if during the renewal process there were any implication that Prairie Crossing was excluding certain students.

Johnson replied there was no evidence of exclusion of any students. Actually, the renewal evaluation team focused on the school's recruitment materials that they are using and noted that currently, materials include language that indicates transportation can be made available if needed, which was not previously used.

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Commissioner Ratliff asked about a description of the transportation that's being offered.

Johnson responded that based on the Evaluation team's review, the school currently has an optional carpool program and private transportation for families who are not able to participate in the program. Of course, transportation is provided for students who require transportation as a result of their IEPs. Johnson reiterated that the Commission staff would be very intentional as the authorizer in evaluating and working with the school to address student transportation. Johnson added that in their renewal application, Prairie Crossing indicated that they would reinvigorate their task force. Johnson also stated that the difference between the 2014 renewal and the 2019 renewal is that a 2014 condition was to create a plan without any measures or metrics tied to it; but as part of the staff recommendation, the Commission will set measures, targets and goals for the task force to address the specific questions.

Commissioner Ratliff asked if the outreach program that was demanded at the last renewal was evaluated to determine if it was effective.

Johnson responded that the evaluation team believed that the outreach plan resulted in the school's ability to recruit more students that are considered at-risk populations. Also, the team believed that the outreach plan did lead to a 3% to 7% increase in low-income students at the school. One thing of note is that because Prairie Crossing is fully enrolled with approximately 400 students, and has been in existence for 20 years, the primary entry grade is at the kindergarten level. Therefore, the school only has about 50 seats to fill every year. Of those 50 seats, 50% goes to siblings as part of sibling priority, which is mandated by the IL Charter Schools Law. Thus, resulting in 15-20 open kindergarten seats annually.

Commissioner Farmer asked a follow up question related to the outreach, specifically if the materials that the school publishes are in other languages, other than in English, considering that the district has a sizable Hispanic population. Are materials provided in Spanish, as well?

Johnson responded affirmatively and stated that Executive Director Deigan indicated at the public hearing that the school now has more than 29 languages spoken.

Commissioner Feinberg asked a follow-up question on the outreach and where students are coming from. Feinberg asked if the Commission has a sense where students are coming from within the district, for example a heat map.

Johnson asked that Mr. Deigan respond to Feinberg's question.

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Geoff Deigan responded (and demonstrated via visual map) that as part of the supplemental additional information that was requested at the time of renewal, an outreach plan, along with a graphic demonstrating where current students are coming from, varies between both Woodland and Fremont districts. Deigan added that the only areas they do not have representation from are areas that have shopping malls and where Six Flags Great America is located at.

Deigan added that the map that was provided to the Commission was tagged where their current students reside and where students are not coming from within the Woodland district boundaries. Referencing the map, Deigan added that the school is doing okay in targeting in some neighborhoods, but the school needs to do better. The school's goal is to take a more targeted approach at directly influencing areas that are not highly represented at PCCS.

Johnson added that in the Grayslake, Gurnee and Gages Lake communities, the Hispanic percentage is about 11%, but when Waukegan is added, which is about 30 to 40% Hispanic, that will be in the general area of the district.

Commissioner Williams asked to confirm the numbers related to the free and reduced lunch (FRL) students. Williams added that in 2014, FRL at Prairie Crossing was 2% and the district was 18%. However, today, FRL at Prairie Crossing is 7% and the district is 36%. Williams asked if those numbers are correct.

Deigan responded that he didn't have those numbers on hand.

Johnson responded that there is a slide in the presentation deck that references FRL percentages.

Commissioner Williams asked to see demographic numbers for the district, and then for English Language Learners.

Commissioner Farmer referenced the state report card for the Woodland district. Woodland has 20% English Learners while Prairie Crossing has 7% English Learners; which is a 13% gap.

Commissioner Williams asked Commissioner Farmer about Free and Reduced percentages.

Commissioner Farmer stated that according to the IL State report cards, Woodland has 36% low-income students and Prairie Crossing had 6% low-income students.

Commissioner Williams confirmed that the percentage of students with IEPs at both Prairie Crossing and the district is 13%.

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Commissioner Feinberg asked the Commissioners and staff how the Commission would be able to monitor the enrollment target to bridge the gap of the Prairie Crossing population with the Woodland district population.

Commissioner Williams stated that given the restrictions of the lottery, it's not as easy to move the needle quickly.

Commissioner Feinberg confirmed that it would only be for the school's kindergarten, which is their entry-level grade.

Johnson confirmed that kindergarten is their entry level grade and added that during the 2014 renewal, there was no formal decision made regarding the option of a weighted lottery, but now with a new administration and in agreement with Prairie Crossing, the staff plans to reapproach the attorney general's office to request the option of having a weighted lottery.

Johnson added that as a result of the renewal evaluation, staff reviewed the statutes that indicate that certain district authorizers are able to identify specific neighborhoods (geographic preferences) when attempting to target a specific subgroup population. Since this is what Prairie Crossing is attempting to do, a weighted lottery would benefit in helping to attract and provide more opportunities for students.

Commissioner Williams asked Geoff Deigan if there has been a shift in the demographics of the students who are on the waitlist.

Deigan responded that the school couldn't collect student demographics prior to entering into the lottery. When students are placed on the waitlist, the school only has the age, address, name and grade; however, more information is requested when they are enrolled.

Commissioner Connelly addressed the Prairie Crossing staff to inquire if they see a problem with the call to action to create a plan.

Deigan responded that they do not see a problem but there is a concerted effort to take this initiative very seriously. However, Deigan stated that he sees barriers on the opportunity to make a promise to somebody that can attend the school, but can't get them in the seat, because of the lottery.

Deigan followed up on William's question as related to the school's outreach. Deigan stated that due to their outreach efforts, the number of out of district applicants has tripled over the last three (3) years. Deigan also added that they would like to see more diversity in their staff as well. Deigan stressed that enrolling a higher number of diverse students is slow moving since

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annually they only have about 25 slots; unless the school had mass attrition at the upper grade levels, which has not happened.

Commissioner Connelly asked Deigan about the lack of transportation and food.

Deigan responded that Prairie Crossing has transportation, they just don't have buses. After doing an analysis, it was determined that PCCS covers two districts in 63 square miles. Additionally, the cost would be in excess of \$300K a year to provide buses to cover the reaches of those two districts. Also, adding buses would alter the length of the school day and potentially the school year. Lastly, Deigan stated that they promise families that if they cannot get to school, the school will get them to school.

Commissioner Feinberg asked how many students take the third-party transportation.

Deigan responded that in the last two years, two students have participated in the alternative private transportation. However, what really works for them is the partnering of parents to share carpooling. In addition, Deigan stated that they want to look at the opportunity to work with INCS to figure out how charter schools can qualify for transportation stipends a little more than they are now. The school would love to have 60% of their transportation costs reimbursed by the State.

Commissioner Ratliff asked Deigan to confirm that there are only two (2) students from a fairly sizable district who have asked for transportation. Deigan confirmed that number.

Commissioner Williams asked Deigan if the school only pays for private transportation for two (2) students. Deigan confirmed that the school pays for private transportation for two (2) students.

Commissioner Williams asked Deigan if they are only paying for private transportation for two (2) students, why is the school spending \$100K on transportation. Deigan clarified that \$100K is not annually, but over the last five (5) years.

Commissioner Williams asked Deigan what the school spends per year on the private transportation. Deigan responded that depending on the demand, \$25K to \$30k.

Commissioner Feinberg asked Deigan how many students are part of the carpool program.

Deigan responded that they have not done a study, but that 18% of their students live in the Prairie Crossing subdivision but they don't all walk to school or ride their bicycles. With that said, Deigan stated that they probably have a 25% carpool rate.

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Commissioner Ratliff asked Deigan if parents are reimbursed for carpooling. Deigan stated that parents can submit a request for reimbursement.

Commissioner Ratliff stated that the carpooling program costs the school zero (0) dollars. Deigan confirmed.

Commissioner Farmer asked Deigan if the cost is the same for each student to be provided an exceptional education and when the school allocates funding, does each student receive the same amount. Deigan responded yes.

Commissioner Farmer asked Deigan if special education students cost the same amount as non-special education student in terms of educational costs. Deigan responded that from a general education fund, yes. With grants and Title funding excluded, yes.

Commissioner Farmer asked why the school is requesting 100% PCTC when the State has recently shifted to an evidence-based funding (EBF) model that prioritizes additional investment costs because research shows that low income students require more expenditures per student, English Learners require more expenditures per student and special education students require more expenditures per student.

Deigan responded that traditional public schools receive property tax, state funding, EBF, local fundraising efforts and others. However, currently, charter schools in Illinois are only receiving about 80 cents to the dollar of what a traditional public school receives and that is why Prairie Crossing is requesting 100% of that. Prairie Crossing is requesting 100% PCTC because that is what it takes to operate.

Commissioner Burns directed a question to the Woodland district, given that Prairie Crossing has been open for 20 years and there are no other charters in the district, what has the district been doing to offer options to students when they want to close this school based on their arguments. Burns added where would PCCS students go that offers an environmental, hands-on approach to learning; is there is a school like PCCS in the Woodland district?

James Petrungaro responded that if PCCS were to close, the Woodland district would absorb PCCS students.

Commissioner Burns followed up with Petrungaro on what innovations have happened in the district in the last 20 years. Petrungaro responded that as legal counsel for the district, he was not qualified to answer those questions. Petrungaro added that due to Woodland having their regular board meeting tonight, the administration and board had to leave the meeting early.

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Commissioner Feinberg commended Prairie Crossing on receiving a Green Ribbon Award and its environmental and ecological sustainability. He added that perhaps a larger point is how to make this school incredibly more accessible for a lot more of the population in the district whether it's at the school level or a broader approach in a partnership with the district.

Commissioner Burns stated that she was wondering how the district has been trying to learn from PCCS and replicating its programmatic offerings.

Commissioner Williams asked if there were any other questions from Commissioners.

Johnson reminded Commissioners that Prairie Crossing sits between two (2) school districts and it pulls from the two districts; but the majority of students reside in the Woodland district. After a proportional analysis was conducted, the pool of funds the school receives by its PCTC is about 47% and 52% of those dollars go to Woodland. As it relates to overall funding, funds that are received by PCCS represents 6% of the overall revenue streams that the Woodland district receives, which is approximately 73 million, and of that, about \$4.7M goes to the charter school. As related to Fremont school district, student enrollment represents 2.5% of their overall student population. PCCS receives 38% of the state aid and 61% goes to the district. As it relates to the overall revenue of Fremont, PCCS' allocation represents 2% whereas 98% of the overall revenue stays with the district.

Johnson added that as it relates to the questions regarding transportation and outreach, those would be posed to the PCCS task force.

Commissioner Connelly asked Johnson if the Evaluation team considered a shorter renewal term, since during public comment, someone mentioned considering a one (1) year term renewal.

Johnson responded that the recommendation of five (5) years was based on the term of their charter agreement and the overall performance of the charter school. Johnson added that if it were possible, evaluators would have recommended more than a five-year term. A shorter term was not considered since it typically takes a school at least three (3) years to make any significant progress towards moving a needle forward.

Commissioner Perez asked if there was demographic data for grades K-4, assuming that is when the efforts first started taking place, when efforts of communication were increased.

Deigan responded that he did not have that data on hand, but that information is reportable.

Commissioner Williams asked if there were any more questions.

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Commissioner Farmer asked if it would be appropriate to propose a modification to the motion.

Commissioner Williams stated that a roll call vote would need to be taken on the motion first.

Commissioner Ratliff stated that since Farmer initially made the motion, Farmer could request an amendment or modification of the motion.

Commissioner Farmer then stated that he would like to modify the motion to 97% of the PCTC instead of 100% and also freeze enrollment and keep the capacity as it currently is for five (5) years.

Commissioner Farmer then made a motion to renew the term for five years at the funding level of 97% PCTC with no enrollment increase.

Commissioner Williams asked for a second. Commissioner Ratliff seconded the motion.

Commissioner Williams asked if there was a need for discussion.

Johnson added that for consideration and information, an additional task force for at-risk student population would be added. The addition of this task force is based on the fact that charter schools are not allowed to request demographic or income data prior to the lottery. The only way the school can identify income is when a family has elected to request a waiver of fees. Another area that the Commission plans to focus with the school is to identify the populations of students that they serve, not only those needing some other form of transportation and meals, but identifying the school's existing populations.

Commissioner Ratliff asked Johnson if she supported the amendment to the motion.

Johnson responded that the staff's recommendation is for five years at 100% PCTC.

Commissioner Connelly asked if by decreasing the PCTC percentage would impact the school's ability to recruit and ultimately support at-risk students.

Commissioner Farmer responded that since it takes several years for an initiative to take effect, when the school is up for renewal in five (5) years and if the Commission sees that the school has made a real effort to address the concerns that were mentioned in the last renewal that haven't significantly changed, then that would be in sufficient time. Farmer added that a 3% reduction would reflect, if the charter school were subject to evidence based funding, the different funding that they would receive based on their current demographics. Farmer also added that the PCTC should probably be lower than that, but 97% is the lowest percentage



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available. Lastly, Farmer stated that this could be a lever, potentially, that would encourage the school to increase their efforts a little bit more than what they did since the last renewal because last time it was more just as an agreement to move forward. While there were some slight increases, Farmer attributes those increases to just the natural demographic trends rather than them trying to disrupt the imbalance that existed prior.

Commissioner Williams confirmed that four (4) years ago, the percentage of low-income students at the district was 18% versus 13%. Prairie Crossing went from 2% to 6%, so it has tripled. Although Williams highlighted these numbers, they are small.

Commissioner Williams asked Johnson if there was an analysis conducted by the team as to whether the PCTC should remain at 100% or change, either up or down.

Johnson responded that during the fiscal analysis, evaluators considered PCTC at 97%, 100% and 103%. The recommendation also considered the new evidence based funding model and the adequacy target. Johnson added that Woodland is doing better than most districts across the State in terms of being at 86% of their adequacy funding, and the district is in recognition status. Also, there weren't any findings that the 100% represented any detrimental impact to either Fremont or Woodland. Therefore, based on the Commission's history of funding and the requests by Prairie Crossing, the recommendation was set at 100%.

Johnson also added that consideration was given to the fact that the Commission is asking the school to do more with the funding that they have now. Also to note, Prairie Crossing is still involved in litigation. A few years ago, Prairie Crossing approached the Commission asking for a reduction in their operational fee to cover some of those litigation expenses. Therefore, the fiscal evaluator analyzed the impact on what the school expends, as well as if there is an adverse judgment related to pending litigation, how that would impact the school.

Commissioner Ratliff commended the Commission staff on the fiscal analysis as that answered most of his questions around the financial impact.

With no other statements or questions, Commissioner Williams called a roll call vote on the amended motion which stated five (5) years, at 97% PCTC with no enrollment increase. The motion failed with three (3) ayes and four (4) opposed.

With the amended motion being denied, Commissioner Williams asked if there were any discussion before calling a roll call vote on the original motion.

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Commissioner Feinberg stated that if it was more reasonable to expect to see some change to their student population within three (3) years, although the recommendation is for five (5) years. He added that if the motion is amended to 100% PCTC with a three (3) year renewal term, the Commission can expect different outcome measures and different outputs within three (3) years.

For point of clarification, Commissioner Perez asked Commissioner Feinberg if he is requesting that the motion be amended to 100% PCTC for a three (3) year renewal term. Commissioner Feinberg confirmed his thoughts.

After a brief discussion on amending the motion for a three (3) year term, Commissioner Burns stated that the last time the Commission voted on a shorter than five (5) year term, ISBE didn't recognize it and forced the Commission to grant a five (5) year term.

Johnson stated that Commissioner Burns was correct as related to prior appeals and those schools were new to the Commission. She added that seeing that Prairie Crossing has been renewed three (3) times, twice by ISBE and once by the Commission, she doesn't know how ISBE would treat Prairie Crossing with a less than five (5) year renewal.

Commissioner Williams said that she was comfortable with a five (5) year renewal given that the Commission is going to work with Prairie Crossing to set specific targets. Williams also stated that the Commission needs to understand the restrictions that the school has given the way the lottery system works about how quickly the needle can actually move. Lastly, Williams stated that as long as the Commission is holding the school accountable and there are specific targets, she is comfortable with a five (5) year renewal.

Johnson added that the amended accountability system now includes accountability actions, so when a school is not meeting its targets, the school is placed on a status of concern, deficiency or probation and so the recommendation to tie these to their accountability plan allows the Commission to annually monitor a school's progress, which is why the recommendation is not set up as a condition.

Commissioner Williams asked Commissioner Feinberg if he would like to propose an amendment to the original motion.

Commissioner Feinberg stated that he would refrain.

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With no other statements or questions, Commissioner Williams called a roll call vote on the original motion which stated five (5) years, at a funding level of 100% PCTC. The motion was passed with five (5) ayes and two (2) opposed.

Along with his vote of yes, Commissioner Perez added that as he looks at the staff recommendation report, the school is Meeting or Exceeding many of the standards that the Commission has set out and what the Commission wants to hold its schools accountable to. Perez added that renewal decisions are based on the total application, not any particular aspects. In past renewal decisions, the Commission has had concerns about a school's financials or other aspects and the Commission works with those schools to improve them, but the Commission has renewed them. Perez added that while the renewal application isn't 100% perfect, the total application warrants another five (5) years. It also warrants the school to continue to serve the students in the community that they are in.

Lastly, Perez stated that it is evident that there is an expressed intention to work with a more diverse population of students and it was important to hear that the school's interest in a weighted lottery, which is the strongest tool to improve their demographics, is being discussed.

Commissioner Williams then moved to new business action items.

### Accept Jurisdiction of Appeal No. SCSC19-002: Chicago Education Partnership V. Chicago Public Schools #299

Commissioner Williams made a motion to accept jurisdiction on Appeal SCSC19-002. Burns seconded. A roll call vote was called. The motion passed with seven (7) ayes and zero (0) opposed.

### Accept Jurisdiction of Appeal No. SCSC19-003: Intrinsic Schools V. Chicago Public Schools #299

Commissioner Williams made a motion to accept jurisdiction on Appeal SCSC19-003. Farmer seconded. A roll call vote was called. The motion passed with seven (7) ayes and zero (0) opposed.

### Accept Jurisdiction of Appeal No. SCSC19-004: Urban Prep Academies V. Chicago Public Schools #299

Commissioner Williams made a motion to accept jurisdiction on Appeal SCSC19-004. Feinberg seconded. A roll call vote was called. The motion passed with seven (7) ayes and zero (0) opposed.

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Accept Jurisdiction of Appeal No. SCSC19-005: Kwame Nkrumah Academy V. Chicago Public Schools #299

Commissioner Williams made a motion to accept jurisdiction on Appeal SCSC19-005. Ratliff seconded. A roll call vote was called. The motion passed with seven (7) ayes and zero (0) opposed.

Shenita Johnson asked that the Commissioners revisit the motion on Prairie Crossing's renewal to state the term, PCTC and increase in enrollment to make certain that it is on record.

Commissioner Williams read the original motion and a roll call vote was called. The motion was passed with five (5) ayes and two (2) opposed.

### **VIII. Adjourn**

Commissioner Williams thanked everyone for attending the meeting and adjourned the meeting at 5:13 pm.