DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

Charter Actions Requiring a Vote
☑ Approve a Charter Application (15 yrs)
☐ Approve a Charter Renewal (15 yrs)
☐ Approve Charter Continuance (5 or 10 yrs)
☐ Approve a Charter Amendment Request
☐ Give a Charter Notice of Concern
☐ Lift the Charter Notice of Concern
☐ Commence Charter Revocation Proceedings
☐ Revoke a Charter
☐ Board Action, Other

Non-Voting Board Items
☐ Public Hearing Item
☐ Discussion Item
☐ Read into Record

Policies
☐ Open a New Policy or Changes to a Policy for Public Comment
☐ Approve a New Policy
☐ Approve an Amendment to an Existing Policy

PREPARED BY: Sareeta Schmitt

SUBJECT: Creative Minds International PCS – Charter Application – Pre-Vote Memo

DATE: May 18, 2015

The applicant submitted a completed application on March 9, 2015. On March 17, 2015, PCSB notified DC Councilmembers, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, and the public via the DC Register and two newspapers of the applicant’s intent to open a public charter school in the District of Columbia. In addition to soliciting public comment via email and mail, a public hearing was held on April 20, 2015.

Board Action
The DC Public Charter School Board (“PCSB”) staff requests that the PCSB Board vote on the proposed charter amendment of Creative Minds International PCS to expand its charter by opening a middle school campus to serve grade 6 in school year 2016-17, and expand a grade per year until it operates through 8th grade. Staff also recommends that the board authorize the board chair to sign the charter agreement amendment reflecting this expansion.

Introduction
The leadership of Creative Minds International Public Charter School (“CMI PCS”) proposes to expand its existing prekindergarten-3 through grade 5 program to serve grades 6-8 in a separate
middle school campus. They will add an additional 240 students over 10 years, one grade per year beginning in 2016-17, to reach a total enrollment of 653 in 2025-26.\(^1\) The proposed middle school would continue CMI PCS’s current international, arts-integrated program and would target students matriculating from the existing program and students from the school’s surrounding neighborhood in Ward 5. The school’s mission, which is only slightly amended\(^2\) from that in their original charter, is to offer “early childhood, elementary, and middle school DC public school students a highly-engaging, rigorous international and inclusive education plan that provides them with the knowledge and skills required for successful participation in a global society through a project- and arts-based international curriculum to foster creativity, self-motivation, social and emotional development, and academic excellence,” (p. 17).\(^3\) The applicant will use research-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum, including the International Middle Years Curriculum (“IMYC”), along with the Common Core State Standards (“CCSS”) to aid students in acquiring the skills needed to compete in today’s global market.

**Analysis**

**Curriculum:** In addition to using the CCSS for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics, CMI PCS will use IMYC to provide an integrated approach to the other subjects, such as science and social studies. During the IMYC two-hour block each day, students will engage in project-based learning that integrates the arts (p.29). The applicant also identifies several philosophies and methods of instruction such as Universal Design for Learning principles and Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences Theory to ensure that rigorous instruction is effectively delivered to all types of learners. Continuing its commitment to providing an inclusive program for all students, including those with disabilities, CMI PCS plans to draw on the Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship-based (DIR)/Floortime model, which focuses on building students’ social, emotional, and intellectual capacities and is, according to the application, particularly useful for students with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders, Sensory Integration and Autism Spectrum Disorders, and Down syndrome (p.28).

**Family Involvement:** The applicant administered a survey to current CMI PCS families and found that 95% of current families would be interested in enrolling their child in the CMI PCS middle school. The school currently has an active parent association. At the capacity interview, a parent from the school shared how CMI PCS parents have formed committees to support the school in various ways. For example, there is a transportation committee that is exploring different means of helping families in need of transportation get to the new school facility. The applicant will continue encouraging family involvement at the middle school and include parents in the planning process for the middle school (p.68). Several parents of current students, including students with disabilities, attended the public hearing and shared their overwhelmingly positive experiences at the school. These parents described how CMI PCS is able to engage and challenge their children academically as well as how the staff at CMI PCS go above and beyond to meet the social and emotional needs of their children. Please see the minutes from the April 21, 2015 board meeting (not yet approved, but included in this Board Book) for further details.

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\(^1\) The school’s schedule of enrollment ceilings, attached to the Charter Agreement Amendment, shows growth of 17-34 additional CMI PCS students per year, as well as growth of 5-15 satellite classroom students per year.

\(^2\) The only change was adding “middle school.”

\(^3\) Page numbers cite information from CMI PCS’s application.
**Finances and Facilities:** The applicant group has a solid budget plan that meets the needs of the middle school program. The proposed budget allows CMI PCS to maintain its small class size model and keep a balanced budget. The facilities plan is strong because the school has a signed, 10-year lease on a new facility that will accommodate the current early childhood and elementary programs as well as a middle school program (p.68).

**Enrollment Ceiling Increase:** At its December 15, 2014 public meeting, the PCSB Board approved a request from CMI PCS to increase its enrollment ceiling, finding that the school met the standard of PCSB’s Enrollment Ceiling Increase Policy. The approved board proposal can be found [here](#), and the meeting minutes, including the unanimous vote to approve the enrollment ceiling increase, can be found [here](#). None of the material information included in the December 15, 2014 memo has changed.

Date: ____________
PCSB Action: _____Approved _____Approved with Changes _____Rejected

Changes to the Original Proposal: ____________________________________
_______________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________