

ACTION ITEM

Re: Universal Daroff Charter School; Nonrenewal of Charter

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Charter School Law (“CSL”), 24 P.S. § 17-1701-A *et seq.*, the School Reform Commission (“SRC”) granted a charter in 2010 to Universal Daroff Charter School (“Daroff”) to operate the school previously named the Samuel H. Daroff Elementary School as a Renaissance charter school for a five-year term commencing on July 1, 2010 and ending on June 30, 2015; and

WHEREAS, the SRC renewed Daroff’s charter in 2016, for a five-year term commencing on July 1, 2015 and ending on June 30, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education (“Board”) replaced the SRC and became its successor with respect to this proceeding on July 1, 2018; and

WHEREAS, Daroff now seeks an additional five-year renewal of its charter; and

WHEREAS, members of the Charter Schools Office (“CSO”) of the School District of Philadelphia (“School District”) reviewed Daroff’s academic performance, organizational compliance and viability, and fiscal health and sustainability during the term of the renewed charter and concluded that there were grounds for the commencement of nonrenewal proceedings against the Daroff under Section 1729-A of the CSL; and

WHEREAS, in compliance with Section 1729-A of the CSL, the Board adopted Action Item #9 on April 30, 2020, which determined that there were substantial grounds for nonrenewal of Daroff’s charter, set forth the reasons supporting such nonrenewal, scheduled a hearing in this matter, and authorized the appointment of a hearing officer to conduct the hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Board appointed a Hearing Officer on May 7, 2020 who held a public hearing on October 19, 20, 21, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30, and November 2, 4, 10, 13, 2020, during which testimony and exhibits were received regarding whether Daroff’s charter should or should not be renewed; and

WHEREAS, a 30-day public comment period was provided following the conclusion of the hearing; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the CSL, Daroff has been permitted to remain in operation pending the outcome of these proceedings; and

WHEREAS, on January 29, 2021, the Hearing Officer certified the record of the hearing and submitted a report to the Board recommending nonrenewal of Daroff’s Charter, including findings of fact, conclusions of law and a proposed adjudication; and

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed all of the testimony and exhibits submitted during the hearing, the Hearing Officer’s Report, including its Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the submissions by all interested parties, and the public comments received; and

WHEREAS, this matter is now ripe for decision; now be it

RESOLVED, that Daroff's request for renewal of its Charter is DENIED.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board adopts the Hearing Officer's Report and its attached Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, as the reasons for this decision.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that in the event Daroff timely appeals this decision to the State Charter School Appeal Board ("CAB"), pursuant to the requirement contained in Section 1729-A(f) of the CSL, Daroff's charter shall remain in effect and Daroff shall be permitted to remain open pending the conclusion of its appeal before CAB. In the event that Daroff does not appeal this decision to CAB, Daroff shall cease all operations pursuant to a dissolution plan and timetable for returning all operations of the school to the School District which shall be established by the School District under the direction of the Office of General Counsel with due consideration for conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, which plan shall be presented to the Board within 60 days of the date of this Order.