



July 22, 2015

**Statement from UNO Charter School Network (UCSN) Chair of the Board Yeni Jimenez
Regarding English Learner Action Plan Submitted to the Chicago Board of Education**

On July 15, 2015 UCSN submitted its English Learner (EL) action plan to the Chicago Board of Education's Office of Innovation and Incubation (I&I). We did this to address the alleged issues raised by the findings of an audit that the CPS Office of Language and Cultural Education (OLCE) abruptly conducted in June at seven of our 16 schools. No other neighborhood or charter schools were audited by CPS.

While UCSN has submitted its action plan to address the EL requirements as CPS requested, we challenge the OLCE's process and protocol for the June audit, as well as its underlying motive.

- UCSN originally submitted an EL compliance plan in September 2014 that specified a five-year implementation timeframe. OLCE approved that plan. UCSN had already started implementation and was on track to meet the original timeline when we were notified that CPS demanded another audit.
- CPS's demand for an EL audit in June 2015 was unexpected because it had approved UCSN's plan less than one year ago. In addition, it happened immediately after UCSN rejected a proposal by CPS Interim CEO Jesse Ruiz to merge UNO with UCSN. (As background, UCSN announced 11 months ago that it intended to let its management contract with UNO expire on June 26, 2015, partly because of the numerous scandals UNO was involved in and the resulting investigations.)
- CPS conducted the audit over a period of just three days in late June, when at least one of the seven schools audited was not even in session. That audit was conducted without any teachers or students present. We contrast this with previous EL audits performed by CPS at our schools, which took more than two months and involved interviews with staff, teachers and parents.
- In its audit findings, CPS gave UCSN only one year to fully implement a compliance plan. Yet Illinois School Code allows for an EL implementation timeline of either two years or the date of the charter's expiration – whichever is earlier. UCSN is on schedule to have its EL compliance plan fully implemented within the two-year timeframe required by law.

We ask that the Chicago Board of Education and CPS return to the most important issue: school performance and student achievement. UCSN students have sustained levels of high academic growth and achievement over the last five years. These strong academic results are a result of the hard work and dedication of UCSN's students, families, teachers, academic staff and leadership, who have managed to achieve this sustained success in the face of numerous hurdles and distractions created by its former management company.

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As we begin this new chapter of UCSN's history in which we now self-manage our network of schools, we remain committed to building upon our demonstrated record of academic excellence for the children and families in the communities we serve.