PRESS RELEASE
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MAYOR ANNOUNCES DECISION REGARDING THREE CHARTER SCHOOLS SEEKING ADDITIONAL SEVEN-YEAR TERMS

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard, joined by Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Tony Bennett and Indianapolis Charter Schools Director Karega Rausch, announced today his decision to grant full seven-year renewals to two charter schools and to issue a conditional extension to a third.

The three public charter schools, Christel House Academy, Fall Creek Academy, and Flanner House Elementary School, opened in the fall of 2002. This fall, the schools petitioned Mayor Ballard to receive an additional seven-year charter.

In addition to submitting a formal petition, the schools also presented their case for full renewal during a public hearing before the Mayor’s Charter Advisory Board – led by former Lt. Governor John Mutz. During the hearing, the board questioned the schools regarding their performance and future plans, and parents, teachers, students and community members shared their perspectives regarding each of the schools.

“The decision whether to renew these charters isn’t one I take lightly. We carefully weighed a number of indicators for each school,” Mayor Ballard said. “In exchange for the flexibility and autonomy charters receive, they must be held to the highest standards of accountability.”

Both Christel House Academy and Flanner House Elementary School were granted full renewals. Fall Creek Academy was issued an extension with specific performance parameters that must be met before the school can reapply for a full renewal.

The most important factor in the renewal decision was whether the schools have demonstrated consistency in achieving exceptional results for students and families. Both Christel House Academy and Flanner House Elementary School have achieved exemplary results in these areas, and while Fall Creek Academy has demonstrated areas of high performance, they have not done so consistently and have not yet sufficiently addressed a few areas identified in the school’s Mid-Charter (4th Year) Review.
Every Mayor-sponsored charter school is evaluated annually against a set of clear, rigorous, and comprehensive criteria, outlined in the Mayor’s Performance Framework. In order to determine whether the three schools should be renewed, Mayor Ballard and his charter schools team reviewed data collected over the past seven years through the city’s accountability system.

The accountability system includes regular site visits by members of the city’s charter schools team, annual analysis of a school’s performance on both ISTEP+ and Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessments, annual visits by local education experts, annual financial analysis by an independent accounting firm, and surveys submitted by parents, staff, and students.

There are a total of 17 Mayor-sponsored charter schools in Indianapolis. State law allows local school districts, public, 4-year universities, and the Mayor of Indianapolis to authorize charter schools.

For more information on Indianapolis charter schools, visit www.indy.gov/mayor/charter.

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