

League of Women Voters of Illinois
2013-2015 Charter School Position Update Study

QUESTIONS and CONSENSUS FORM

Please complete and mail this form by **January 31, 2015** to: League of Women Voters of Illinois, 332 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 525, Chicago, IL 60604-4422

League: _____

Consensus Meeting Date(s) and Number of Members Participating:

League Contact - Name and email address:

Please indicate whether your League reached consensus on the following questions by checking the appropriate boxes.

CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

ACCOUNTABILITY

For what should charter schools be held accountable?

1. The reasons for revoking or not renewing a charter should include that the school:

	Yes	No	No consensus
A. Failed to meet content standards, pupil performance standards or school climate standards.			
B. Failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management (current law)			
C. Violated any provision of state or federal law from which the charter school was not exempted (current law)			
D. Exceeded student expulsion rates or attrition rates of district schools			
E. Discriminated against students based on family economics, disability, race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services			
F. Employed fewer than 90% teachers who are fully certified (would require a change in the law from the current 75% requirement for most charter schools)			

G. Interfered with union organizing			
H. Used curriculum or instruction that failed to maintain the separation of church and state			
I. Failed to admit students throughout the year as space became available			
J. Failed to enforce truancy laws			

How often should charter schools be held accountable for charter renewal?

2. Existing charter schools should be evaluated in incremental periods:

	Yes	No	No consensus
A. not to exceed 5 years for purposes of charter renewal			
B. not to exceed 10 years for purposes of charter renewal			

Who should hold charter schools accountable?

3. The authority for approving and renewing charters should reside in:

	Yes	No	No consensus
A. A body which has been elected to oversee spending of taxpayer dollars (e.g., school districts outside of Chicago)			
B. A body which has been appointed by a mayor (e.g., Chicago Public School Board)			
C. The Illinois State Board of Education, which is appointed by the governor			
D. A State Charter School Commission which is nominated by the governor and appointed by the Illinois State Board of Ed.			

4. Local voters should be able through referendum to:

	Yes	No	No consensus
A. Establish a proposed charter school (current law)			
B. Override a decision by the Charter Commission which reverses the decision of a local school board.			

TRANSPARENCY

5. Like other public schools, charter schools should be subject to:

	Yes	No	No consensus
A. Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest of members of the governing board			
B. Disclosure of sources of revenue			
C. Disclosure of salaries and benefit packages			
D. Disclosure of the identity of the owner of any property and buildings			
E. Disclosure of admission processes			

FUNDING

6. Since charter schools receive public funding:

	Yes	No	No consensus
A. Subcontracting most of the management of a school to a for-profit organization should be prohibited			
B. When a student transfers between traditional public and charter schools, funding for that pupil should be prorated and transferred in a timely fashion			
C. All property, equipment, and materials purchased by a school with public dollars should be surrendered to the local district if the school closes for any reason			

7. Adequate and equitable funding for charter schools:

	Yes	No	No consensus
A. Should be accomplished without financial harm to traditional public schools in the district.			

8. In some cases, charter schools provide virtual education through computers off-site and the students do not need to attend a bricks and mortar school.

	Yes	No	No consensus
A. This is not appropriate for elementary aged students except in rare circumstances			
B. For high school students, funding should be based on actual costs rather than the same level of funding provided to other charter schools.			

ELEMENTS OF THE CURRENT LWVIL POSITION

9. Does the League membership still support these statements from the 2001 position?

	Yes	No	No consensus
A. The advantages of charters largely outweigh the disadvantages.			
B. An area of opportunity resulting from charter schools is innovation.			
C. An area of opportunity resulting from charter schools is increased parental choice.			

NOTE: The LWVIL position regarding charter schools is intended to apply as well to contract schools in Chicago. Contract schools are public schools which, like charter schools, are operated by private entities under contract with Chicago Public Schools, but are subject to more of the operating rules of traditional Chicago public schools, such as union membership for teachers.

Additional comments from the Local League may be added here: