



June 1, 2015

Dear Neighbor,

The BCO has learned of the possible development of a charter high school ([Intrinsic School](#)) within the Bowmanville boundaries. Charter schools are tuition-free schools that receive public funding but operate independent of an existing school system. Chicago introduced them to give more school choice and alternative models to communities.

In order to keep the community informed and convey community opinion to Alderman O'Connor on this proposal, we ask that you read the information below, then ***complete an online survey***.

The survey can be found at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PNP6DKH>

The information below is based on conversations with the attorney for Intrinsic, the CEO/Principal of Intrinsic, as well as conversations with the Principal and Vice Principal of our local high school, Amundsen.

A meeting for immediate neighbors has been organized by Intrinsic during the week of May 25th. Community-wide meetings at other locations will take place in June and as this process progresses.

Thank you for your time and participation,
The BCO Board

LOCATION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

- The proposed charter school would be located on Western Ave., slightly north of Balmoral Avenue, and would sit on approximately 4 acres of land within the Rosehill cemetery. This land is part of an 11 acre parcel that has been for sale as a planned development;
- The remaining 7 acres of land within the Rosehill cemetery would remain for sale;
- Ingress and egress to the school would be confined to Western Avenue, with no plans for pedestrian access to Bowmanville Ave. *at this stage*;
- An artificial turf field for athletics is planned for the easternmost part of the site, with no bleachers, lights or access to Bowmanville Ave. *planned at this stage*.
- A zoning change will be required for Intrinsic to build a school at this location. In considering the zoning change, the city will want to know the community's view on the *need* for a charter school *at this location* and reaction to its impact on the neighborhood;
- In general, charter schools must meet the criteria of fulfilling a need in the community in which the proposed school will be added, as the existing schools there are underserved, overcrowded, or low-performing. This does not appear to be the case in our neighborhood.

[TAKE THE SURVEY!](#)

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INTRINSIC SCHOOLS

- Intrinsic has been previously approved by the Board of Education to open up to five charter schools in Chicago. Their new model strives to blend technology with great teaching to provide every student a path to college. Their classrooms are designed around flexible pods that can be reconfigured to fit the lesson and their teaching utilizes Chromebooks for every student.
- The targeted location in Bowmanville would be its second charter school. They have been directed by the Board of Education to seek out locations north of Fullerton and west of Western Avenue. Intrinsic has one existing school at 4540 W. Belmont Avenue (Belmont near Cicero). That school is in its second year of existence, thus no success metrics are available yet.
- Intrinsic plans to enroll kids at their new site via blind lottery from both the neighborhood and across the city. The site location was chosen by Intrinsic primarily for land availability and for access to transportation.
- The proposed school would serve grades 7 – 12, with a target of ~900 students at max enrollment.

AMUNDSEN HIGH SCHOOL

- Administrators at Amundsen feel that the presence of a charter school at the proposed location would negatively impact their school, as well as other area high schools.
 - o Specifically, the Amundsen administration expects that up to 20% of students attending Intrinsic School will draw from the neighborhood, lowering enrollment at local schools.
 - o Because budgets for schools are based on student enrollment, each student attending a charter school draws funds from local schools. These funds are used at neighborhood schools to hire new teachers, expand programs that meet the needs of local students, and increase test scores, college readiness/scholarships, and career opportunities;
- They feel that adding additional high school seats in an area where high schools are performing strong, continuing to improve, and are not at capacity does not serve the best interest of students or the community.
- Administrators at Amundsen believe that their school is on track to become a Level 1 performing school. They believe the presence of a charter school at the proposed location would negatively affect this possibility.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- [A May 27 article by DNAInfo provides a good summary of the May 26 neighbor meeting.](#)
- [This May 26 statement from Alderman O'Connor gives insight into his perspective at this stage.](#)
- [A May 20 DNAInfo article highlights a coalition of north side CPS principals united against charter expansion in their areas.](#)
- <http://www.amundsenhs.org>
- <http://www.friendsofamundsen.org>
- <http://intrinsicschools.org>
- <http://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/2013/11/30/portage-park/charter-schools-presentation-panned-as-dog-pony-show>
- <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/04/13/chicago-school-designed-with-blended-learning-in.html>
- <http://www.substancenews.net/articles.php?page=4504>
- <http://www.progressillinois.com/posts/content/2014/01/08/debate-over-new-chicago-charter-school-proposals-heats-cps-hearing>
- <http://cps.edu/NewSchools/Pages/Process.aspx>

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