

BOARD OF EDUCATION
CITY OF CHICAGO
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
(Zoom)
held on
August 1, 2023

STENOGRAPHIC REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
had in the above-entitled cause held virtually
via Zoom, commencing at 6:05 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

MS. MARY FAHEY-HUGHES, Special
Education Advisory Committee Chairwoman
MR. JIANAN SHI, Board President
MS. TANYA WOODS (Virtually)

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

MS. NICOLE ABREU SHEPARD

MS. SANDRA HEIDT

MS. CHRISTINE PALMIERI

MR. MIQUEL A. LEWIS

MS. KAT BUITRON

MS. KALAVEETA MITCHELL

MR. FRANK LALLY

COMMISSIONER RACHEL ARFA

MS. ALEX (on behalf of Olga Prybi)

MR. JIM CAALLERO

MS. TENESHA RAWLS

MS. ALYSSA RODRIGUEZ

MS. KIMBERLY WESTON DODD

MS. TRACEY STELLY

MS. STEPHANIE ANDERSON



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(Whereupon, the Special
Education Advisory Committee
Meeting convened at 6:05 p.m.)

MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Good evening,
everyone, welcome to the Chicago Board of
Education's Special Education Advisory Committee
Meeting. Notice of this meeting was posted on
July 26th, 2023, at least 48 hours before this
meeting at the Wilma Rudolph Learning Center,
Board Office at One North Dearborn and the 42
West Madison lobby and it's on CPSBOE.ORG.

18:05:00

18:05:20

Today is August 1st, 19 -- 2023. We're
holding this meeting in the Wilma Rudolph
LEARNING Center auditorium at 1626 West
Washington Boulevard. I am Mary Fahey-Hughes.
We recognize Board -- we'd like to acknowledge
that Board President Jianan Shi is here tonight.
And we also recognize that Board Member Tanya
Woods, who while not part of this committee, is
also on -- attending virtually.

18:05:39

18:06:00

I'd also like to acknowledge the
Committee Members who are here tonight starting
with Nicole Abreu, Stephanie Anderson,
Commissioner Rachel Arfa, Jim Cavalero,



1 Kimberly Weston Dodd, Sandra Heidt, Alex Kuske
2 on behalf of Committee Member Olga Prybl, Frank
3 Lally, Miquel Lewis, Kalaveeta Mitchell,
4 Christine Palmieri, Tenesha Rawls, Alyssa
5 Rodriguez, Tracey Stelly and Kat Buitron Vierra. 18:06:53
6 On behalf of the Chicago Board of Education,
7 thank you all for coming tonight.

8 The order of the meeting will be as
9 follows: Committee discussion, audience
10 feedback, public participation and then we will 18:07:11
11 all adjourn.

12 Before we begin I would like to welcome
13 Dawn Hill, principal of Rudolph Learning Center,
14 to say a few words.

15 DR. HILL: Thank you. Testing. 18:07:30

16 Testing. Okay. Thank you, Chairperson Fahey.

17 Good evening, staff, students, parents
18 and community. Thank you for joining us this
19 evening for the inaugural Special Education
20 Advisory Committee Meeting at Wilma Rudolph 18:08:01
21 Learning Center. My name is Dr. Dawn Hill, and
22 I am principal at Rudolph. I started in this
23 role on July 1st, 2023, however, I have previous
24 experience supporting the school as an



1 administrator in the Office of Diverse Learner
2 Supports and Services, ODLSS. Rudolph is a
3 specialty school that serves students in pre-K
4 through 8th grade. 100 percent of the
5 population are students with disabilities. A
6 third of the student body have multiple
7 disabilities and are medically fragile.
8 Students require a significantly modified
9 curriculum.

18:08:27

10 As a fellow alumni of Tennessee State
11 University, I am inspired by Wilma Rudolph, who
12 overcame a physical impairment to become the
13 fastest female runner. My vision for Rudolph is
14 as follows: In collaboration with the school
15 community, Rudolph will be a premier specialty
16 school that provides a safe nurturing
17 environment where students engage in
18 high-quality specialized instructional
19 programming centered around their diverse needs.
20 Rudolph will work relentlessly to ensure
21 students are meeting and exceeding their
22 individual goals. Each student will realize
23 their potential for greatness. Rudolph will
24 earn Olympic gold status as a school of

18:08:40

18:08:56

18:09:09



1 excellence and model for others.

2 I would like to share a few safety
3 points and notes. Please note that the primary
4 exit and entrance to this room are the doors in
5 the rear of the auditorium. If you are leaving 18:09:35
6 the room, please use these doors. During the
7 meeting we ask that you keep all aisles and
8 exits clear. If you need any assistance during
9 the meeting, please wave the attention of one of
10 our security officers. Restrooms are outside 18:09:50
11 the rear auditorium door to your left. Once you
12 get to the hallway make another left.

13 At this time I will turn it over to
14 Chairperson Mary Fahey-Hughes to continue with
15 the meeting agenda. 18:10:05

16 Thank you.

17 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you,
18 Dr. Hill.

19 Good evening, everyone. This is the
20 inaugural meeting of the CPS Board of 18:10:18
21 Education's Special Education Advisory
22 Committee. My name is Mary Fahey-Hughes, and I
23 am super excited to get started on this work.
24 I'm also grateful to Mayor Johnson for



1 appointing me to the Board and for charging us
2 to prioritize the needs of students with
3 disabilities in CPS. Thank you all for joining
4 us in person and online. And thank you to each
5 Committee Member for your willingness to serve 18:10:51
6 with pretty short notice. We on the Board were
7 intentional about assembling this Advisory
8 Committee with CPS parents, advocates, teachers,
9 staff and principals who have deep knowledge of
10 the challenges families experience within the 18:11:08
11 CPS special ed system as well as a deep
12 knowledge of the best practices to support
13 students with disabilities.

14 To give you a little background about
15 me and who I am and how I got here, I'm a CPS 18:11:22
16 parent of two graduates and two current
17 students, three of whom have disabilities. I
18 became a special ed advocate when my oldest
19 child was in an instructional program for
20 kindergarten at Barbara Vick. I went to my 18:11:40
21 neighborhood school and spoke to the principal
22 about enrolling my child into 1st grade, and
23 when she learned he had autism and an IEP, she
24 responded, oh, we don't do that here. This --



1 and she sent me on my way into the confounding
2 world of cluster placement.

3 This was a wake-up call for me, a
4 privileged middle-class white woman as my son
5 experienced discrimination for the first time. 18:12:13
6 And though my a-ha moment was embarrassingly
7 late, it suddenly became very clear to me that
8 this type of denial of opportunity is what black
9 people, Latinx people, non-English speaking
10 people, people who are LGBTQIA, people who have 18:12:31
11 disabilities and other marginalized people
12 experience all the time. That experience opened
13 to me the world of advocating for educational
14 equity and opportunity for our beautiful,
15 hard-working and precious children. 18:12:50

16 I've spent the last 17 years organizing
17 and helping parents navigate the CPS special
18 education system and have also worked to reform
19 some systemic issues within CPS.

20 Since accepting this Board position, 18:13:07
21 I've had many conversations about what it will
22 take to build trust in the CPS special education
23 system. It is my experience that parents often
24 feel unheard or that their input just doesn't



1 really affect the decisions being made by the
2 District. These are decisions that impact their
3 children's learning experiences.

4 On this Board we plan to lift up
5 parent, student and educator voices by creating 18:13:33
6 opportunities for meaningful engagement for
7 everyone connected to the CPS special education
8 system. This is so we can grow equity in CPS.
9 Our children deserve an educational experience
10 where they are respected, supported, celebrated, 18:13:52
11 included and given the opportunity to thrive and
12 live up to their full individual potentials.

13 Committee Members, you will now
14 introduce yourselves one by one starting from my
15 right. Ms. Mitchell, would you like to 18:14:14
16 introduce yourself?

17 MS. MITCHELL: Okay.

18 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: And if you'd
19 like, can you please state your name, your role
20 or how you're connected with special ed and what 18:14:24
21 you hope to accomplish as part of this
22 Committee? If anyone needs me to repeat that
23 later on, please let me know.

24 MS. MITCHELL: Good evening, my name is



1 Kalaveeta Mitchell. I am a parent advocate. My
2 role here is as a Committee Member. I have
3 three children, two who have autism, one who has
4 autism and PTSD. I began advocating for my
5 children for the past 14 years starting with my
6 daughter. And I came here through the request
7 of Ms. Fahey-Hughes, and I'm looking to change
8 drastically the system that has been developed
9 here in CPS for special ed because it does not
10 support the needs fully of our diverse learners.

18:14:56

18:15:21

11 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you.

12 MR. LALLY: Thank you.

13 My name is Frank Lally. I am a person
14 with a disability, was once a student with an
15 IEP, now I draw on that experience as an
16 advocate at Access Living, which is Chicago's
17 center for independent living, an advocate for
18 students with disabilities.

18:15:35

19 As a member of this Committee and in
20 general, I'd love to foster more community --
21 opportunities for community input and
22 participation when it comes to decisions made
23 about students with disabilities in the
24 District. I think that's something that's been

18:15:50



1 lacking for a long time as you mentioned. So
2 I'm excited for the future in this role.

3 MS. BUITRON: Hi, everyone, my name is
4 Kat, I am a parent of three CPS students. I was
5 also a CPS student who was an immigrant. I'm
6 still an immigrant, but I was learning English
7 and it was really hard, which is why I started
8 communicating with people outside of CPS once I
9 graduated and I became really passionate about
10 public education. And two years after I became
11 involved with the special education even before
12 being a mom, not knowing that I was going to
13 have a kid not only with autism but with a
14 severe chronic illness, and CPS has not made it
15 easy at all.

16 All three of my kids have at some point
17 had an IEP, now only one of them does. And it
18 has been so much growth for me as a person but
19 also for me to be able to help other parents
20 that are in my community and other parents like
21 me whose English is not the first language, who
22 are not familiar with the system and who are
23 afraid sometimes to come forward asking for the
24 things that kids -- their kids deserve because

18:16:17

18:16:37

18:16:52

18:17:07



1 they are afraid of their immigration status or
2 how they will be perceived by not speaking
3 English as a first language. So I am here very
4 grateful, very humble and so ready to move
5 forward and help everyone.

18:17:33

6 MS. ABREU: Hi, my name is Nicole
7 Abreu, I have three kids in CPS going into 3rd,
8 5th and 6th grade, two of whom have
9 disabilities. My oldest is quite medically
10 complex and has rare disabilities, and I am very
11 passionate about finding more systemic,
12 consistent ways across the District to include
13 students with complex support needs with their
14 peers.

18:17:58

15 My daughter goes to school with her
16 siblings in our neighborhood, and I'd like for
17 those that want that and the parents feel
18 appropriate for something that can be more
19 accessible to families across the District.

18:18:18

20 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you.

18:18:35

21 MS. KUSKE: Hi, everyone, my name is
22 Alex Kuske, I'm a staff attorney with Equip for
23 Equality. I'm here on behalf of Olga Prybl, who
24 is the vice president of special education



1 clinic at Equip for Equality. We're the
2 protection and advocacy agency for the State of
3 Illinois, so we work with families to make sure
4 that their rights in the community, in school,
5 in facilities are being appropriately followed
6 and respected. And so we're excited to work on
7 this Committee to make sure that CPS is doing
8 everything it can for kids with disabilities.

18:18:59

9 MS. RAWLS: Hi, my name is Tenesha
10 Rawls, I am a field representative from CTU,
11 former special education teacher. I'm looking
12 to accomplish -- looking for more equity, proper
13 resources and consistency within the District
14 for our students.

18:19:13

15 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Good evening, everyone,
16 my name is Alyssa Rodriguez, my pronouns are she
17 and her. I am a CPS school social worker. And
18 I came to the world of special education after
19 starting my journey in a school for research for
20 autism for students in my undergrad and decided
21 that I wanted to work with students of all
22 abilities and disabilities to be able to help
23 them create functional, sustainable life skills
24 and community skills. I have experience across

18:19:27

18:19:44



1 a wide range of schools, general education,
2 resource, significantly modified, and I've also
3 been a social worker here at Rudolph in the
4 past.

5 My biggest goal that I would love to 18:20:06
6 achieve is being able to advocate for parents
7 and be able to educate them on what they can
8 access as parents within the community and their
9 schools at the community at large, as well as
10 being able to provide them with functional 18:20:19
11 supports so that they can navigate the world and
12 help their child navigate the world in a
13 meaningful and engaging way.

14 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Oh, sure.

15 MR. LEWIS: Good evening, everyone, my 18:20:30
16 name is Miquel Lewis, I am a parent of two CPS
17 educated children, one of whom has graduated
18 college and one who is on her way, we're looking
19 for a drop-off date next week. So I'm excited
20 for her to continue her education journey in 18:20:50
21 that way. But I also am an alum of CPS and an
22 advocate for our entire city of children who
23 attend CPS schools.

24 In my full-time day job role I am the



1 acting director and the chief probation officer
2 of the Juvenile Probation and Court Services
3 Department and those children particularly find
4 themselves on the margins in so many ways,
5 including having the needs -- their educational
6 needs met. And I'm privileged to serve on this
7 Advisory Committee to support this work in
8 putting forth a plan, a real plan to support
9 those needs of all of our diverse learners,
10 including these children who find themselves to
11 be on the margins.

18:21:18

18:21:32

12 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you.

13 MS. STELLY: Good evening, everybody, I
14 am Tracey Stelly, I am an -- a career person
15 with CPS. I've been with CPS for 34 years, a
16 teacher for 13 of those years, now a principal
17 for 15 years. And sitting here being a part of
18 this Committee is important to me because as a
19 teacher starting off, I think it was my second
20 year, I realized that I had about 33 percent of
21 my students were DL students, were special ed
22 students. And I just thought that
23 differentiating was it didn't matter whether or
24 not they were DL students or gen ed students, I

18:21:49

18:22:06



1 know what I had to do. So I'm an advocate to
2 make sure that not only my DL teachers but my
3 gen ed teachers get the professional
4 development, my teachers work collaboratively
5 together to make sure and guarantee that our
6 students, all of them, have the best education
7 ever under my school building as well as up
8 under all school buildings in CPS. So thank you
9 for having me.

18:22:40

10 MR. CAVALLERO: Good evening, everyone,
11 my name is Jim Cavallero, I am an organizer with
12 the Chicago Teachers Union, I've done that for
13 the last -- a little over three years. Before
14 that I was a special education teacher in CPS
15 for 26 years, and I also worked in a private
16 therapeutic day school for three before that.
17 And I think my goal here is that I want to see
18 an improvement to the equity -- the inequities
19 that we see in special education in our schools.
20 And also there's a definite link between how our
21 schools are resourced and funded, how our
22 teachers are trained and the services that our
23 students get, and I think we need to take into
24 account all three of those. Well, there's many

18:22:51

18:23:06

18:23:23



1 more than that, but we have to make sure that
2 we're seeing where those connect. And I think
3 over the last several years I've noticed where
4 those connections are and where they're failing,
5 and so it's my hope that we can improve on those
6 things so we're making sure that our students do
7 get the services that they deserve.

18:23:52

8 MS. WESTON DODD: My name is Kimberly
9 Weston Dodd, I'm a SECA for the Chicago Public
10 Schools. I'm currently working in a cluster
11 program at a Chicago public high school. I
12 would like to accomplish SECAs have a more role
13 in IEP meetings, working with the parents so we
14 can get more resources and support the teachers
15 so we can service our students better.

18:24:08

18:24:27

16 COMMISSIONER ARFA: Hi, everyone, I am
17 Commissioner Rachel Arfa of the Mayor's Office
18 of People with Disabilities, and I am thrilled
19 to be at this Committee with each of you. I've
20 thought about my goals that students with
21 disabilities are prepared for any type of future
22 they imagine, make sure that together to connect
23 and opportunities throughout CPS, city of
24 Chicago make the opportunities possible in

18:24:48



1 making sure that the education that we provide
2 in our students is accessible for every CPS
3 student. Thank you for having me.

4 MS. PALMIERI: I'm a parent of an
5 autistic teenager. He was delayed, a much
6 needed paraprofessional in 2016, and as a result
7 of going through that experience and realizing
8 that there were systemic delays, I'm also a
9 founding member as well as others here tonight
10 of SPEACC, the Special Education Advocacy
11 Committee of Chicago, who called for the ISBE
12 inquiry and resulting corrective action which
13 families received around \$22 million in remedies
14 for. And, you know, I've been fortunate to turn
15 those learned experiences into a professional
16 role as a special education advocate with Matt
17 Cohen and Associates. But I'm really hoping to
18 improve transparency, equitable access for all
19 families to receive a free and appropriate
20 public education and sort of making the process
21 for families and staff significantly easier. So
22 I'm excited that feedback is welcomed, and I
23 think it's really necessary to be able to
24 improve. So happy to be here.

18:25:24

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18:25:58

18:26:12



1 MS. HEIDT: Good evening, my name is
2 Sandra Heidt, and I am a 18 -- for 18 years I
3 have a lot of lived experience caring for a
4 loved one. My son was a young adult male living
5 with autism, intellectual developmental 18:26:44
6 disabilities and speech delay. And might I just
7 say in the beginning when he started in the CPS
8 school system there was very little available,
9 so, of course, I had to seek out as much
10 information as I could. 18:27:00

11 With that being said, I navigated the
12 best that I could. I'm a single parent, I was a
13 single working parent, and it took until he got
14 into the high school years and me retiring from
15 employment, I literally had to retire in order 18:27:14
16 for me to focus more on what he needed, the
17 services and supports that he deserved, what was
18 missing, and from -- through mediation agreement
19 he was actually moved to a program that was
20 beneficial for him and that's better for him, 18:27:30
21 and he's thriving at that program.

22 Since then I've sought out all kinds of
23 trainings. I'm appreciative to Ms. Hughes for
24 thinking about me and including me in this



1 process. I know some of the members here from
2 previous meetings. And with all the trainings
3 that I've had and the certifications I'm wearing
4 a lot of hats. I'm the actual community member
5 for my son's local grammar school LSC, and I
6 focus on diverse learners. I mean, I love all
7 children, but I focus on the diverse learners
8 because they seem to be forgotten in that space.

18:27:55

9 I'm also wearing a couple of other hats
10 because what I'm thinking is what we should do
11 within CPS, we know our loved ones transition
12 over their years, but we also got to remember
13 that they will grow up and they grow up fast.

18:28:11

14 So I've been trying to bridge some of those gaps
15 between what happens after transition and where
16 they are at the present. So I have actually
17 been doing webinars. My passion is legislation
18 and policy. I've had some workshops. And this
19 is just something that I've done, I've shared
20 with a lot of CPS parents about things that I've
21 learned, transition. I would love to see early
22 transition, you know, earlier than high school,
23 maybe late like, you know, 6th, 7th, 8th grade
24 where they can learn skills and supports and,

18:28:25

18:28:40



1 you know, I learn more that way they'll prepare
2 themselves for later on.

3 Some of the things -- other things that
4 I would like to see, of course, equity, we all
5 said that. Some creative thinking when it comes 18:29:05
6 to educating our loved ones with disabilities,
7 all of them, because we -- there's still a
8 segment that's left out, you know. We have a
9 tendency to focus on those that have higher
10 cognitive functioning versus those with lower, 18:29:20
11 and that lower, you know, group, that's what
12 happened with my son, got left out, and that's
13 the reason why I had to seek mediation.

14 And then, of course, beyond that just
15 promoting systems changes in CPS. I always have 18:29:33
16 a lot of ideas so I'd love to share them with
17 you all, share them with my Committee Members
18 here and I'm willing to work with everyone.

19 MS. ANDERSON: Hi, I'm Stephanie
20 Anderson, I'm the very proud principal of Vaughn 18:29:47
21 Occupational High School, a CPS school that
22 serves students with -- primarily with
23 developmental disabilities, including
24 intellectual disabilities, autism and multiple



1 disabilities, as well as more psychiatric
2 conditions.

3 I started my journey with special ed
4 because I have a vision impairment so I also had
5 an IEP growing up and lived the seat as a 18:30:10
6 student with an IEP where a bunch of people
7 talked about me and made decisions for me. And
8 I think number one I'm here to make sure that
9 doesn't happen, that student voice is not
10 overlooked, that the parents are heard. I also 18:30:26
11 worked as a District rep, formerly diverse
12 learner support leader with ODLSS, and I really
13 feel that there could be some changes that
14 really help to support the parents, guardians,
15 students and teachers, SECAs, bus aides, anyone 18:30:44
16 that's working with our most complex students
17 here in this District to provide the most
18 high-quality education for a student that is
19 individualized for their needs based on the team
20 in front of them that's making decisions on that 18:30:59
21 student's best, you know, best interest. So I
22 hope to focus on that I in the IEP and help us
23 get there where we can provide for every student
24 regardless of their functioning level



1 intellectually or physically or social
2 emotionally and help to provide those supports.
3 And I'm really grateful to be here, and it seems
4 like there's a lot of really great opinions and
5 talent in the room and I think we can get some
6 things done. Thank you.

18:31:27

7 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you.

8 Thank you, everyone, I so appreciate
9 you being here.

10 Now, we're going to move on to the
11 Committee discussion. Committee Members will
12 discuss three questions out loud, just a
13 conversation.

18:31:38

14 The first one is:

15 What would you like the Committee to
16 accomplish?

18:31:51

17 What would make the chief selection
18 process more inclusive?

19 And do you have specific
20 recommendations for the experience you want to
21 see in the new ODLSS chief.

18:32:01

22 So going forward I'll state the
23 question, we'll have a discussion after each.
24 And when you speak please state your name before



1 you speak and please be mindful speaking one at
2 a time so that the audience can hear our
3 discussion clearly. Thank you.

4 All right. So let's discuss this first
5 question: 18:32:32

6 What would you like the Committee to
7 accomplish?

8 Anyone?

9 MS. BUITRON: I'll go first. Kat will
10 go first. 18:32:47

11 I think one of the biggest things we
12 need to accomplish, I think something that all
13 of us have mentioned, is finding more
14 inclusivity within the diverse learner community
15 because despite the fact that all of us have 18:32:59
16 vast experience in advocating for our children
17 and for other children, we all have experienced
18 things that maybe some of us haven't.

19 For example, what Sandra was saying
20 with you have the diverse learners and some kids 18:33:17
21 that are here cognitively and some kids that are
22 lower, and those are the kids that are falling
23 through the cracks, not only in the cluster
24 programs, not only in the general education



1 program but also in the blended classrooms, and
2 we need to breach the gap. We need to make sure
3 that we accomplish true equity when evaluating
4 each child. And also understanding the cultural
5 aspect of each family that brings that child,
6 understanding that not every parent has time to
7 take the kid after school for therapy because
8 they work. Understanding that the sibling of
9 those diverse learners spend an awful lot of
10 time in waiting rooms. And understanding that
11 that complex situation doesn't affect only the
12 child but the parents, extended family in the
13 cases of multigenerational households and also
14 the siblings who are students in CPS. We need
15 to start there, making sure that we see each
16 student as an individual and not as a group of
17 thousands of people.

18:33:45

18:34:04

18:34:21

18 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Okay. Thank you.
19 Anyone else? Yes.

20 MS. HEIDT: For me -- for me I worked
21 with city -- I work within city government for
22 33 years, and although I was management, we had
23 staff support personnel that were unionized, and
24 I'd like to know more about what CTU's role is

18:34:33



1 when it comes to training your teachers because
2 from past experience or from what has been said
3 they have a choice whether they should be
4 trained in something, you know, pertaining to
5 special ed or a person living with a specific
6 disability. So I'd like to know a little bit
7 more. I would like us to look into that a
8 little bit more and see if there's opportunity
9 for some -- all teachers to have some training,
10 even if it's a module and it not be so -- you
11 know, because again when I worked with local
12 government we had certain types of training
13 programs that although you were unionized they
14 were mandated because it helped you do your job,
15 it helped you perform your job in a better way.
16 And if you're a teacher, whether you're special
17 ed or a gym teacher or just general education
18 teacher, if that's, you know, what your passion
19 is, then you should be willing and wanting to
20 learn as much as you can to help your children
21 that you educate.

18:35:06

18:35:20

18:35:35

18:35:48

22 So that's something I kind of would
23 like to see happen because I think we get stuck
24 in that -- because I've heard it from friends,



1 well, we don't have to take this class or, you
2 know, and then I ask the question why don't you
3 choose to if you have diverse learners in your
4 classroom, whether it's one or many, why don't
5 you want to so that you can have a better
6 working knowledge of how to help that student.

18:36:08

7 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you.

8 MS. STELLY: I'd like for us to be
9 think partners in regards to the culture and
10 climate of some of the attitudes of teachers and
11 staff members just to make sure that they know
12 and understand that they are teachers of all
13 children. And that I'd like for us to also
14 include in this discussion the professional
15 development that I mentioned earlier that is so
16 much needed for gen ed teachers, extremely
17 important, more collaboration and time for DL
18 teachers and gen ed teachers to collaborate and
19 meet and plan. But not only that too but also
20 to revisit LRE policies and to make sure that
21 schools are providing the least restrictive
22 environment for our students according to
23 abilities or not.

18:36:25

18:36:42

18:37:00

24 I am a principal of students that are



1 autistic, students with different learning
2 disabilities, and to me, you know, like I said,
3 as a teacher there's a difference, but I
4 guarantee if you come into my school you're not
5 going to see a difference, but there is a
6 learning difference. The students are getting
7 what they need to have. I'd just like for the
8 Committee to really work on making sure that the
9 gen ed teachers get what they need and change
10 some of the culture and attitudes and climate of
11 schools so that gen ed teachers cannot say or
12 will not say, oh, it's not time for that kid to
13 be in my classroom right now, they're supposed
14 to be with the DL teacher. And so that is
15 important to me on the Committee and for us to
16 work together collaboratively to be think
17 partners about.

18:37:34

18:37:50

18:38:06

18 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you.

19 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Hi, again, Alyssa. I
20 guess I would love to see this Committee take a
21 very active approach in having uncomfortable
22 conversations and recognizing that we're all
23 here to push ourselves and push this District
24 forward in finding more equitable education

18:38:22



1 services. But I would also be remiss in saying
2 that I would love to see more inclusion of
3 related services and that conversation at the
4 door.

5 As a school social worker oftentimes I 18:38:42
6 am working with students who are struggling to
7 find motivation, struggling to engage in the
8 curriculum, struggling to engage with their
9 peers, and then we have students that are
10 struggling to learn those foundational, 18:38:54
11 functional life skills and communication skills.
12 And I do a lot of collaboration around that, and
13 I think when we are talking about how we make
14 special education for our students with
15 disabilities more sound and a better way forward 18:39:06
16 is by really including related service providers
17 that are having conversations continuously and
18 inviting them more to the table to really talk
19 about what related services can look like inside
20 the educational setting and how we can use those 18:39:21
21 to better allow our students to access their
22 general education curriculum as well as
23 significantly modified curriculums.

24 So I would love to work with you all to



1 kind of have that conversation as well as push
2 us all to have those uncomfortable conversations
3 and recognize that it may not always be a warm
4 and welcomed approach and in those moments to
5 take a step back and look inward that we are all
6 working commonly towards the same goal.

18:39:43

7 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you. All
8 right. Yeah, can we just have one more comment,
9 go ahead, one more, and then we'll move on to
10 the next question.

18:39:55

11 MR. CAVALLERO: Hi, Jim Cavallero.
12 Since we were talking about professional
13 development, I would like to say that I think we
14 should really push CPS to rethink how they do
15 professional development together. Our
16 members that I talk to on a regular basis all
17 want trainings, but they're kind of -- but
18 they're stuck in when they get training. They
19 can't do something at the beginning of the year
20 because that training schedule is filled up by
21 the principal. And that's no -- that's no shot
22 at the principal, they're doing what they're
23 supposed to be doing, right. But they would
24 like to see a little bit more of a diversity of

18:40:05

18:40:21



1 trainings so they can get those trainings.

2 And then there are other times
3 throughout the year that we could be doing
4 training, and I think our members would like to
5 see that. And I think that's going to be what's
6 going to improve a lot of the stuff that we do
7 in the classroom and really improve services for
8 students.

18:40:41

9 And one thing with uncomfortable
10 conversations, I would love to see this
11 Committee take us on a road where we get off of
12 the term diverse learner. And no offense to
13 anyone here who has used it because people have
14 used it for years now, but for a lot of people
15 that term comes from an era in CPS special
16 education where we started to see some things go
17 in a negative way. And I think it would be
18 really good for us to have a discussion about a
19 better term that we would like to use to refer
20 to our students because all of us our diverse
21 learners, but not all of us have to overcome a
22 disability in order to achieve success. So I
23 would love to see us do that.

18:40:50

18:41:04

18:41:18

24 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Okay. Thank you,



1 everyone.

2 We're moving on to the next question.
3 What would make the chief selection process more
4 inclusive for you all?

5 COMMISSIONER ARFA: This is 18:41:43
6 Commissioner Rachel Arfa. I just want to
7 comment on the comment about terminology. I
8 think it's critical that we include the same
9 terminology, and I would recommend that we use
10 the term students with disabilities because 18:42:00
11 that's what we're talking about here. And I see
12 some applause here so I'm happy to discuss this
13 more, but I think that's a critical product that
14 we need to discuss with making sure.

15 And for this question I think that to 18:42:21
16 make the change process more inclusive we must
17 also create a culture of accessibility. We must
18 make every single thing that we do accessible,
19 including participation for people with
20 disabilities. If we have other people with 18:42:38
21 disabilities here, we have to be proactive in
22 how we provide them access and materials because
23 people if we need to build that for us across
24 the system.



1 So I really want us to really to take
2 accessibility not only terminology bringing
3 access in our attitude towards disability, which
4 is that we also have to realize one size does
5 not fit all. I remember when I was trying to go
6 through CPS and there was made about my unique
7 because I was deaf. There was that for students
8 with learning disabilities, I was deaf, I did
9 not have a learning disability. And, I mean,
10 this was many years ago, but I think that let's
11 be honest about the bias and what we don't know
12 it takes time to find that information and ask
13 that information. And I think that that was to
14 really build a more inclusive process together.

18:43:17

18:43:36

15 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you.

18:43:54

16 Let's hear from Frank and then
17 Christine.

18 MR. LALLY: Sure. Thank you.

19 So on the question of making the chief
20 selection process more inclusive but then also
21 on the last question as well, I think my biggest
22 thing is to make community feedback as
23 accessible as possible. So here we have in
24 these meetings public comment but that's not

18:44:06



1 always accessible for everyone, they're not able
2 to come to meetings, they're not able to log on
3 and things like that. So I'd love for maybe
4 having open-ended forms on the website for
5 people to send in feedback or an e-mail but then
6 also making that accessible in different
7 languages for folks who don't speak English, for
8 folks who use screen readers. And I don't know,
9 we can think of different creative ways, but I'd
10 love to solicit as much feedback because all of
11 us at this table have been in the situation
12 where we feel we had great ideas and maybe
13 hadn't been able to provide that feedback. And
14 I want to make sure for those who have those
15 ideas that they're able to get that feedback
16 out.

18:44:31

18:44:46

18:44:56

17 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Christine.
18 MS. PALMIERI: Yeah, so Christine. I
19 think that one of the biggest challenges within
20 the District too is just transparency and access
21 to information that's consistent and easily
22 accessible is really important. For example,
23 CPS has its own language and its own acronyms,
24 et cetera, but when we're looking for a chief I

18:45:05



1 think what's really going to be important is to
2 make sure that there's opportunities for public
3 participation in the final interview, so whether
4 that's the final three selected candidates. And
5 again what that public participation will look
6 like, how it will look like, how, you know, we
7 can ask questions and get feedback and not --
8 and actually provide feedback that's taken into
9 consideration instead of, you know, thank you
10 for your feedback, goodbye.

18:45:30

18:45:42

11 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you. All
12 right.

13 Go ahead, Nicole.

14 MS. ABREU: I think something that
15 I've -- over the years at my kids' school like
16 I've been involved in the Parent Advisory
17 Council, the Bilingual Advisory Council and
18 different things like that, and I often think
19 that we're not taking advantage of the
20 structures that already exist. You know, I went
21 to monthly Network Parent Advisory Council
22 meetings and Bilingual Advisory Council meetings
23 where people from all over the Network and
24 sometimes all over the city and parents who have

18:45:52

18:46:06



1 made time to come to these and there's an
2 opportunity there to, I don't know what the term
3 CPS uses, like road show or something like that
4 where we already have parents who have committed
5 either through PAC or BAC to be engaged with 18:46:36
6 CPS. And I know that they're always looking for
7 people to come and activities and helping to
8 empower and engage those parents. So we already
9 have that structure. And I know we also have
10 the ODLSS Family Advisory Board. So thinking 18:46:51
11 about the structures that are already in place
12 where parents are coming and trying to figure
13 out how we can capitalize on that.

14 And I think for me making clear, I'm
15 just speaking as a parent, why is it important? 18:47:13
16 Why should I -- like a lot of people are
17 wondering what does the chief do? What does the
18 chief of ODLSS do? What are they responsible
19 for? You know, they think of their teacher,
20 their SECA, their principal maybe. You know, a 18:47:31
21 lot of parents don't know about Network Chiefs
22 or DRs. And then by the time you get to ODLSS
23 chief it's like, I don't know. So I think
24 making that clear like, you know, because I do



1 think over the years I feel like the tone is set
2 from the top, but I didn't really realize that
3 until I kind of got out just my school
4 environment and into larger environments in CPS.
5 And I until then couldn't have even told you
6 what the chief was. So...

18:47:58

7 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: All right. Thank
8 you.

9 All right. So we're going to move on
10 to the final question. Do you have specific
11 recommendations for the experience that you want
12 to see in the next ODLSS chief? Go ahead.

18:48:10

13 MR. LEWIS: Chairwoman Fahey, I think
14 you set us up for a real robust conversation,
15 these are some real probative questions. I feel
16 like the opportunity that we have to support the
17 identification of a chief is really the crux of
18 this work and the opportunity to select someone
19 who is going to uphold the values that we really
20 want to see in a leader, someone who has
21 commitment to incorporating the diversity of
22 thought that this body represents, that the
23 community of Chicago and our parents and
24 students represent and someone who is committed

18:48:31

18:48:46



1 to collaboration.

2 Education is really at the core of our
3 children's experience in Chicago and our
4 children are connected to lots of systems. And
5 so someone who has the experience in
6 collaborating with multiple systems is going to
7 be important, not to mention someone who has a
8 commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion,
9 someone who holds that value and implores that
10 value in their day-to-day work.

18:49:12

18:49:26

11 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you. Go
12 ahead.

13 MS. WESTON DODD: I would like the
14 chief to be familiar with the SECA and the bus
15 aide roles. We spend the majority of the time
16 with the students, and we need to be treated as
17 professionals and also allowed to attend the IEP
18 meetings so they can get our input on the
19 students before school, during school, after
20 school and provide us with extra training so
21 we'll be able to support our students more and
22 be able to communicate with our parents during
23 the IEP meetings because we only get a chance to
24 see the parents during report card pickup and

18:49:39

18:49:54



1 since we're with the students more than anyone.

2 And also we need more collaborations
3 with our teachers because we only get to
4 collaborate with them twice a year. So it helps
5 up to be able to communicate. We need time to
6 work with the teachers and also communicate with
7 our parents so they'll know, you know, what our
8 job entails in working with the students on a
9 daily basis.

18:50:20

10 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: All right. Go
11 ahead, Kalvi.

18:50:34

12 MS. MITCHELL: Kalaveeta. So I would
13 like for the selection of the next chief to have
14 some kind of background here in Chicago, have to
15 have lived here at some point through a peer,
16 maybe been a student in CPS and really have on
17 the ground experience working with the
18 community, with parents, definitely have a
19 background in special needs, not just that they
20 went to school and received an education but
21 they actually have some relative experience
22 dealing with families and individuals who have
23 disabilities. Because the problem, you know,
24 that we've seen recently is having someone who

18:50:48

18:51:10



1 they were principal but they really had no
2 background and they couldn't understand it,
3 probably didn't want to in terms of
4 disabilities. And we need someone who is really
5 committed to working with families and students
6 and making sure that there's policies and
7 programs in place that directly support the
8 students.

18:51:37

9 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you.

10 Anyone else?

18:51:50

11 Go ahead, Principal.

12 MS. ANDERSON: Thanks.

13 I really truly believe we would need a
14 special educator, I echo those sentiments, but
15 also, you know, I newly came into CPS, you know,
16 special ed administration not knowing a lot of
17 the processes and the learning curve is pretty
18 large in such a large organization that having
19 some experience working in this very large
20 system it is -- would be very beneficial to
21 someone coming in and someone who also has led a
22 staff, a large staff before in some other
23 capacity since they will be leading quite a
24 large staff, needing to, you know, work on

18:52:03

18:52:17



1 morale, filling vacant positions, which has
2 been, you know, an issue and truly understands
3 that any school that might not be doing right by
4 kids with disabilities right now it's not
5 because they don't want to be, it's because they 18:52:47
6 don't know how or they don't have the right
7 supports or they don't have a coach that knows
8 how to teach that teacher or that SECA or that
9 bus aide or that principal what they should be
10 doing with that complex child in front of them, 18:53:00
11 right, who should be receiving very
12 individualized supports and planning. And I do
13 not think it is for lack of trying, it is when
14 people aren't aware of what to do, they're not
15 going to know how. 18:53:14

16 And so whoever is selected does need to
17 know how to provide support to the people that
18 are working with the students every day in a --
19 with a customer service type of approach. Maybe
20 instead of being as focused on all the 18:53:28
21 compliance and crossing our T's and dotting our
22 I's on paper, what we're doing and how we're
23 interacting with students has to be the focus
24 and helping the people that are doing that every



1 day because I think people are looking for help.

2 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Okay. Thank you.

3 In the interest of time we're going to
4 wrap up those questions. And I really
5 appreciate all the thoughtfulness that went into
6 your responses. 18:53:48

7 So now we're going to open it up to
8 hear from our audience members. The discussion
9 questions are on the screen in front of the
10 stage. You can choose any question to respond
11 to if you're selected to speak. We have staff
12 floating in the audience with microphones, if
13 you'd like to speak, please raise your hand and
14 a staff member will come to you. Anyone?

15 Bueller? 18:54:05

16 All right. I will take that as we've
17 heard enough.

18 Okay. So if you did not get a chance
19 to speak today, written comments will be open
20 until 5:00 p.m. tomorrow, August 2nd. The link
21 is at CPSBOE.ORG. Thank you for your feedback
22 that is coming, we really want to hear from you. 18:54:48

23 So let's now proceed with public
24 comment. As a reminder -- I'm sorry, there are



1 registered speakers, right? Am I on the wrong
2 spot? No, I'm good.

3 As a reminder the union will speak
4 before public participation, if they're here,
5 and any elected officials will speak after the
6 conclusion of public participation. The rules
7 are as follows:

8 Members of the public who registered to
9 speak were given the option to attend in person
10 or via an electronic format. Those who
11 preferred to attend via electronic format were
12 given information to access this meeting by
13 dialing a number and using their phone. We did
14 this so that speakers with limited or no access
15 to the Internet or who may have a weak Internet
16 connection could still participate using their
17 phones.

18 Also, members of the public may submit
19 written comments for Board of Education Meetings
20 via the Written Comments Form on the Board's
21 website at again WWW.CPSBOE.ORG or you can mail
22 in comments to One North Dearborn, Suite 950.
23 Written comments received between the day the
24 public agenda was posted through 5:00 p.m. the

18:55:28

18:55:39

18:55:53

18:56:07



1 day after the Board of Education Meeting will be
2 submitted to the Board and published within five
3 business days on our website at again
4 WWW.CPSBOE.ORG.

5 Speakers, please listen while I provide 18:56:42
6 directions for public participation. I will
7 call your name and number when it is your turn
8 to speak. For speakers joining us virtually, as
9 a reminder to unmute, please press star 6. Once
10 you hear your name please state your name for 18:56:57
11 the record, then the 2-minute timer will start.
12 Once the 2 minutes are over, proceed to conclude
13 your remarks to allow for the next speaker to
14 begin. Thank you.

15 We are now ready to call registered 18:57:14
16 speakers from the speakers' list.

17 Speaker number 1 is Amy Orta. All
18 right. Thank you. Speaker number 1.

19 MS. ORTA: Hi there, this is Amy Orta.
20 Sorry, doing my text. 18:57:39

21 Hi there, I am a mother of two dyslexic
22 children, a 2nd and a 4th grader, and I'm here
23 to ask for your support in helping us get gen ed
24 as well as DL teachers updated with all recent



1 data and information on working with children
2 with dyslexia. Of SLDs children with reading
3 impairments are the largest group, and SLDs are
4 actually the largest group receiving services
5 under IDEA.

18:58:11

6 And my first child was told probably
7 something we've all heard here before, it's
8 fine, she'll catch up, it's because she's an ESL
9 and actually she only speaks English. So we
10 were given excuses time and time again, and
11 they're very old and outdated excuses in which
12 it was just exhausting. Her remediation was
13 delayed.

18:58:29

14 Fortunately for my son I had already
15 jumped through all the hoops and learned
16 everything. I had given up and sacrificed my
17 job. Like so many parents who have kids with
18 special needs, we give up so much and we need
19 help. We've made a lot of progress in the See
20 Past Dyslexia Collaborative Group, it's been
21 amazing the last year, and the District has
22 really gotten up to date on so many current
23 literacy situations and issues, and we would
24 just really love your support in helping us to

18:58:43

18:58:58



1 continue that work to get it into the classroom
2 because it's not in the classroom yet. And we
3 are about to undergo another year and every year
4 that these littles and even the olders
5 miss remediation is significant for them.

18:59:24

6 My son who has had remediation
7 intensively for his significant deficit has seen
8 huge growth, and he's able to keep up with his
9 peers and that is just wonderful remediation
10 work. And we can do it. And we are all in the
11 dyslexia collaborative here also to help and
12 support you guys. So anything, please, we'd
13 love to help and support you and what you guys
14 would like to achieve. Everything you've said
15 so far has been amazing. So that's all I have.

18:59:38

18:59:51

16 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you for
17 your comments.

18 Speaker number 2 is Renee Freisinger,
19 who is joining virtually. Speaker number 2.

20 MS. FREISINGER: Hi, this is Renee
21 Freisinger.

19:00:10

22 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: We can hear you.

23 MS. FREISINGER: Okay. Good evening,
24 I'm a parent of a rising 7th grader with



1 dyslexia, and I've been a SECA in CPS for more
2 than eight years working with students with
3 specific learning disabilities in reading. I'm
4 also one of the members of CPS Family Dyslexia
5 Collaborative talking to you tonight about the
6 need to prioritize learning disabilities in
7 reading as part of any improvements this
8 Committee is hoping to make.

19:00:32

9 My son and the students I work with are
10 just a few of over 50,000 CPS students who have
11 a reading disability, however, they're also part
12 of 95 percent of students who have the capacity
13 to read. They're also luckier than others
14 because their disability has been diagnosed and
15 acknowledged by CPS as SLD in reading, however,
16 they are far from being okay.

19:00:43

19:01:01

17 The students I work with currently are
18 part of one of CPS's few high school dyslexia
19 programs. These kids are just awesome. They're
20 smart, creative. They're just really wonderful
21 human beings, but they're in high school and
22 they can't read. They tune out from class work
23 because they know they can't do it and they
24 don't have enough confidence to try. They goof

19:01:17



1 around, they act out, they get in trouble,
2 anything to divert attention from the shame they
3 carry about not being able to read. They're
4 passed along from year to year even though
5 they're not engaging in their class work and
6 can't read.

19:01:40

7 My son attends a north side school that
8 is well-known for being privileged, but his
9 school offers no remediation or support for his
10 disability. He's fortunate that I can arrange
11 for private tutoring, however, for the past two
12 years my son has been spending several hours
13 each week working on his reading, time that he
14 should be engaging after school in activities
15 with his peers or just being a 12-year-old kid.
16 This time has greatly impacted his ability to
17 form friendships with his classmates.

19:01:52

19:02:07

18 Also, I am nowhere near as privileged
19 as the families around us, and we forego many
20 basics in order to fund his tutoring. And
21 despite all the time and dedication to his
22 tutoring, I still hold a significant fear that
23 these efforts won't help him enough and he will
24 fall through the cracks like so many other

19:02:22



1 students, like the students that I work with.

2 I'm incredibly proud of my son for
3 showing up every day to put in the work, but my
4 heart still breaks knowing that he and so many
5 other students have to work so much harder to 19:02:46
6 put in so much extra time for what they should
7 be getting at school. So I am begging you to
8 please fix this for my kid and the rest of the
9 kids. Thank you.

10 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you for
11 your comments. 19:03:03

12 Speaker number 3 is Maria Louisa Agate.
13 (Whereupon, the following was
14 spoken in Spanish and
15 translated into English.) 19:05:39

16 MS. AGATE: If you allow me I can say
17 it in English.

18 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Please.

19 MS. AGATE: Good evening, my name is
20 Maria Louisa Agate, and I am the proud parent of 19:05:44
21 two CPS students. My daughter is a rising 7th
22 grader but reading at the level of a 2nd grader.
23 I am also the chair of my school's LSC and a
24 member of CPS Family Dyslexia Collaborative.



1 Some have said that dyslexia does not exist in
2 Spanish, and I'm here to tell you that it does.
3 And our Hispanic students need just as much
4 identifying their reading disabilities and
5 getting them help to make them better.

19:06:15

6 My daughter is one of as many as 30,000
7 Hispanic students at CPS who have dyslexia.
8 Hispanic children show the same signs of
9 dyslexia as other children, but our teachers in
10 our schools do not understand how to recognize
11 dyslexia in English or in Spanish. My IEP team
12 says that we can talk about dyslexia and say
13 things that are confusing to me. Her ODLSS
14 teacher does not know how to help her reading,
15 and my school does not have services for her in
16 Spanish or English. There are programs like
17 Esperanza that can help students in Spanish.

19:06:28

19:06:46

18 Only 1 percent, 1 percent of students
19 with IEP are reading proficiently. Although we
20 hear that ODLSS is doing more, things are not
21 better in our schools. Literacy is the most
22 powerful tool we can give our children, and a
23 good education should not be a privilege. It is
24 time that we do better for our kids and come

19:07:01



1 here asking the Committee to place a higher
2 priority on improving identification services in
3 support for students with specific learning
4 disabilities.

5 I'm also disappointed that this
6 Committee does not represent specific learning
7 disabilities when 40 percent of diverse students
8 do have specific learning disabilities. Thank
9 you.

19:07:26

10 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you. Thank
11 you for your comments.

19:07:38

12 Speaker number 5 is Brook Rourke.

13 MS. ROURKE: Hello. Thank you for
14 having me. My name is Brook Rourke, and I'm the
15 parent of four Chicago Public School students.
16 I'll probably cry too. Two of them have a
17 specific learning disability in reading as well
18 as ADHD, anxiety and depression.

19:07:57

19 Due to early screening, outside
20 remediation and an IEP that addresses his needs,
21 my 7-year-old was diagnosed and started
22 remediation early enough that he will be able to
23 read. He's lucky. His self-esteem is strong
24 and he's proud of his specialized instruction he

19:08:09



1 knows makes it easier for him to read.

2 I'm here to talk about my teenager and
3 the other teenagers. They don't have that
4 luxury. We can tell you countless stories of
5 our teenagers whose reading disabilities weren't
6 acknowledged by CPS until middle or even high
7 school. Kid J graduated and started reading
8 tutoring his freshman year and then he left
9 college because the work is just too much. Kids
10 A and L who developed depression and anxiety
11 because they could no longer keep up with their
12 course work but they're too proud to ask for
13 help. They act out. They avoid.

19:08:39

19:08:53

14 Our high schoolers rarely, if ever,
15 receive help because the majority of CPS high
16 schools do not have the programs or capacity to
17 teach basic reading and writing. There are
18 adults in our Network who never learn to read as
19 children. A father who never identified as
20 dyslexic and as an adult cannot read. The
21 grandmother who is raising her grandchildren and
22 learned through their reading struggles that her
23 75-year-old brother has never been able to read.

19:09:08

19:09:21

24 We have an ethical and moral obligation



1 to ensure that our CPS students learn to read.
2 And as you start your work, we implore you,
3 please place a high priority on improving the
4 diagnosis and the support for those students
5 with specific learning disabilities so they can
6 read in high school. Thank you.

19:09:44

7 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you for
8 your comments.

9 Speaker number 4, I'm going a little
10 out of order number-wise, but it's Rosa Yu, who
11 is joining virtually.

19:09:58

12 MS. YU: Hi, my name is Rosa Vermita,
13 I'm a proud parent of three beautiful children,
14 including a rising 4th grader, he has dyslexia
15 and dysgraphia. In fact, it's his birthday
16 today and I'm stepping out on his birthday party
17 because I think this is so important.

19:10:16

18 I urge you, the Special Education
19 Advisory Committee, to examine the so important
20 issue of teaching and supporting all students
21 how to read, especially those with dyslexia.

19:10:29

22 I'm also one of the members of the CPS
23 Family Dyslexia Collaborative, and I just want
24 to share three things with you.



1 I want to say dyslexia is real. It's a
2 learning difference that makes reading really
3 difficult. It often runs in families.
4 Generational trauma is impacting our families.
5 It is common. Up to 20 percent of people can
6 have dyslexia or show signs of it, that means
7 around 66,000 CPS students have the probability
8 of having dyslexia. And it's life long, it's
9 something you don't outgrow, but with the right
10 support people with dyslexia can get better at
11 reading and writing. It's easily one of the
12 greatest Civil Rights issues in our country
13 right now, and if we don't help our children
14 learn how to read, it kicks off a devastating
15 downward spiral, one that is the source of so
16 much inequality in our society. And personally
17 I found my son on this downward spiral.

19:10:53

19:11:11

19:11:28

18 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you.

19 MS. YU: As a mom just one thing is
20 that this is easily one of the reasons why
21 people go to jail. And I hope that the chair
22 member that represents the criminal justice
23 system really advocates for giving kids the
24 tools to learn how to read because we know this

19:11:45



1 offsets a cycle where we fall, our kids fall
2 between the cracks of education and into the
3 justice system.

4 So I implore you to make dyslexia,
5 dysgraphia, all of this a priority as you take
6 on this work. Thank you. 19:12:13

7 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you for
8 your comments.

9 All right. So I just want to take a
10 few minutes if any Committee Members want to
11 share their thoughts before we wrap up. Go
12 ahead, Ms. Palmieri. 19:12:24

13 MS. PALMIERI: Sorry, I just have a
14 question in regards to the public comment, which
15 was really powerful. And I'm just -- I have a
16 lot of questions, we all do, we're new to this,
17 and I hope I don't get kicked off on the first
18 night. 19:12:37

19 So I don't want this to turn into --
20 this is an amazing opportunity, an amazing
21 opportunity of families to come and share their
22 experiences. But I also don't want us to feel
23 isolated over here in this public comment not
24 shared with the Board Member and the General 19:12:48



1 Board Meeting and with the CEO and CEdO. So how
2 will the public comment from here be shared?

3 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: We -- it is my
4 understanding that we are going to capture all
5 comments and share them with the Board Members.

19:13:13

6 MS. PALMIERI: Okay, that's great.
7 Thank you.

8 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Sure.

9 MS. BUITRON: I just want to say it's
10 very interesting that all five speakers came to
11 talk about the same specific thing. And I
12 believe most of us are on social media probably
13 in all of these groups. I don't have a kid with
14 dyslexia, but I have a kid with dyscalculia, not
15 the same thing but very similar to what Maria
16 Louisa was saying of they don't know how to
17 identify it, they don't know how to diagnose it,
18 and they definitely don't know how to teach
19 these kids properly. And our schools don't have
20 the resources to provide a reading specialist
21 where needed or any additional supports. And
22 these right here needs to be something that we
23 as a team need to constantly be paying
24 attention.

19:13:29

19:13:41

19:13:54



1 Showing up on your son's birthday like
2 Rosa was saying to make sure that her child has
3 a voice is very big. The fact that all the
4 speakers came to talk about the same thing. And
5 I'm not going to be surprised that the next
6 meeting we have, we all know what the theme of
7 the meeting is going to be. So we just need to
8 be prepared for that and we need to start making
9 mental notes for when we meet of where we want
10 to move forward. And as Christine said, we want
11 to make sure that these are not just words said,
12 we want to act on this and we want to make it
13 better for everybody.

19:14:22

19:14:36

14 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: We as a Board are
15 committed to full communication two-way so I
16 think that we will get the messages from these
17 meetings out to the appropriate people.

19:14:49

18 Anyone else? Go ahead.

19 COMMISSIONER ARFA: I just wanted to
20 thank everybody who shared their comments today,
21 it's very powerful. It is very personal. And I
22 just wanted to acknowledge the experience behind
23 those comments and just want to ask I want to
24 make sure that people who use -- that need are

19:15:12



1 able to participate. So I would like to know
2 what we are able to make sure that people are
3 able to share the most comfortable that would be
4 helpful to share with the public but also with
5 us.

19:15:48

6 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Okay. Thank you.

7 MS. MITCHELL: Kalaveeta again.

8 To the mom here that spoke about
9 dyslexia, I have a friend whose son has
10 dyslexia, and she had to spend the better part
11 of a year suing to get her child placed in a
12 school outside of CPS that specifically focuses
13 on dyslexia, so a dyslexia school. And so from
14 there her and a friend they started a group of
15 parents, I think it's called the Dyslexia
16 Collaborative, I'm not sure, Ms. Rourke, if
17 you're in that group. But even though we don't
18 have someone here who is a parent or has a child
19 with dyslexia, we are definitely -- a lot of us
20 are committed to making sure that your child,
21 your children, all those children that have
22 different disabilities are represented and that
23 they receive the services. Because one of the
24 things that I've always found problematic in CPS

19:16:07

19:16:26

19:16:43



1 is the programming. Years ago -- because I
2 think I may have one of the oldest children with
3 disabilities that's in CPS or graduated from CPS
4 recently, years ago CPS used to have an autism
5 program and that was taken away like so many
6 other things. And that is some things that we
7 need to see come back into CPS, not just autism,
8 but I mean all of the different programming for
9 the different disabilities because the students
10 cannot get serviced if those programs are not
11 here.

19:17:14

19:17:31

12 And I think what has been happening
13 over the years is it has been this idea of,
14 well, we don't have it here so we're going to
15 farm the children out. But the problem is that
16 if the parents aren't able to fight to get those
17 services for their children, they don't get them
18 at all and that's problematic. And that's, you
19 know, kind of -- that is the thing that started
20 me on a 14-year twice-a-year due process battle
21 to get those for my children. And it should be
22 a seamless process of when these children are
23 diagnosed, whether it's in CPS or whether it's
24 in an IEP, that it is a comprehensive diagnosis

19:17:42

19:17:57



1 that everything under -- every disability under
2 the sun is tested for these students so we know
3 what they have and then we can properly start
4 providing those supports in-house instead of
5 farming them out, unless it is something that we
6 just really can't focus on in CPS. But
7 generally I think it should be in-house because
8 that's where they're going to be most of the
9 day, five days a week.

19:18:32

10 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you.

19:18:46

11 Anyone else? Sorry, go ahead, Nicole.

12 MS. ABREU: I think this may be a
13 mundane technical thing, but I know we were all
14 issued CPS e-mails, and I noticed that I cannot
15 send or receive e-mails to people not in CPS.
16 So I was just wondering if that was going to be
17 changed so we can communicate with parents.

19:19:02

18 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: We will look into
19 that.

20 MS. ABREU: Great. Thanks.

19:19:14

21 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: And get back to
22 you.

23 MS. PALMIERI: And then, Mary, I have
24 one question too. Like, for example, are we



1 able to ask for information and actually
2 receive -- you know, like in the effort of
3 transparency, it would be great for next month's
4 meeting or our next meeting to know an update on
5 how many teachers within CPS are receiving the
6 full Wilson training, how many -- you know,
7 where are we with that, what's our plan moving
8 forward.

19:19:28

9 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: I think there's
10 opportunity for all sorts of processes, and I
11 think we will work that out as a Committee. We
12 are -- kind of jumped into this, and we are
13 setting up systems so that we can communicate
14 effectively and get answers to questions that we
15 need.

19:19:40

19:20:03

16 All right. Anyone else want to -- yes,
17 go ahead.

18 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Kind of going off --
19 Alyssa, by the way. Kind of going off what
20 Christine was saying in terms of can we get
21 updates, as we build these protocols and systems
22 to get more information on what is available, I
23 would love to continue that conversation on what
24 testing services or protocols that

19:20:15



1 psychologists, school psychologists have access
2 to because they are doing a lot of really great
3 work that goes way over my head as a school
4 social worker but continuing to kind of talk
5 about what they have access to so that when we
6 are actually meeting for initial IEPs or initial
7 evaluations and, you know, triennials and all of
8 that, please forgive me, it's summer break,
9 these terms are going out of my head right now,
10 that we are continuing that conversation so we
11 know what they have access to so that we are
12 really coming to the table in a meaningful way
13 when we're meeting with families for the first
14 time, the second time or the third time and
15 really diagnosing students and being able to
16 provide real supports and creating meaningful
17 goals on IEPs.

19:20:38

19:20:54

19:21:05

18 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you.

19 Yes.

20 MS. HEIDT: So just to piggyback off
21 the gentleman next to you, what's your name
22 again, sir?

19:21:14

23 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Miguel .

24 MR. LEWIS: Miguel .



1 MS. HEIDT: You know, collaboration
2 again amongst other systems to me is very
3 important because again like there's all kind of
4 legislation about what teachers should do now in
5 IEP meetings versus giving information about
6 puns, given information about the able account,
7 making sure that they know what outside systems
8 they're being mandated to communicate during the
9 IEP process. And those are some of the things
10 that I've been doing on my -- as an advocate
11 making sure that families and parents are
12 pre-aware of this so that if the team forgets or
13 don't have the necessary resources to share they
14 are aware of it, they know that this is going
15 on. So again collaborations amongst other
16 systems. It's like a big silo. I mean, it's a
17 whole cycle and everybody connects, ISBE, and
18 then they connect to -- they connect to the
19 independent service coordinator. You know, and
20 again our loved ones are growing older, so we
21 really have to think about what happens as they
22 get older because in my case, you know, it just
23 hit me. Now my son is at a place where I'm
24 trying to figure out because of his executive

19:21:29

19:21:43

19:21:57

19:22:10



1 functioning, you know, trying to figure out --
2 because he didn't get some of the services that
3 was necessary what do I do. And as a single
4 mom, and I'm from old school and from the south,
5 you know, I just teach him the best way I know
6 how. And again, he's thriving at his program.

19:22:38

7 So I just want us to ensure when we
8 communicate to parents and the public we have to
9 do the work too. I mean, educators and
10 clinicians can teach at school, but we also have
11 to reinforce that and I grew up that way. So,
12 you know, just some reminders.

19:22:50

13 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you.

14 Anyone else?

15 Go ahead.

19:23:01

16 MS. KUSKE: I just want to second
17 Commissioner Arfa's comment and say that if
18 we're going to be -- trying to be accessible as
19 possible at this hearing, it's really important
20 that we're considering language access but also,
21 you know, do we have cart services going, do we
22 have screen reader accessible paperwork
23 available on the website. Because I think if we
24 want appropriate feedback, we should at least

19:23:15



1 have a forum that parents who are coming to
2 speak can request interpretation. We know CPS
3 has full-time interpreters in many languages
4 and, you know, if we can make sure that the
5 appropriate people are present at the meeting,
6 we're more likely to get the diverse feedback
7 that we're seeking than if, you know, parents
8 are having to come speak in a language that's
9 not their preferred language or might feel
10 prevented from coming in the first place because
11 they can't participate in what we're saying or
12 in the public feedback period.

19:23:41

19:23:53

13 MEMBER FAHEY-HUGHES: Thank you.

14 Anyone else?

15 All right. Then we're wrapping it up,
16 people.

19:24:04

17 So the support we have from the Mayor's
18 Office is unprecedented. The Mayor, the Board
19 and CEO Martinez are aligned to take on the task
20 of transforming how special education is managed
21 and delivered in CPS. We can actually do this,
22 and I invite everyone who cares about special ed
23 in CPS to join in this conversation.

19:24:21

24 As a Board Member, I am committed to



1 ensuring that CPS is transparent, service
2 oriented and has meaningful two-way
3 communication with families, teachers, staff and
4 students.

5 Written comments will be open until 19:24:49
6 5:00 p.m. tomorrow, August 2nd. The link is at
7 CPSBOE.ORG. And we plan on a more in-depth
8 community engagement at a later date. I'll let
9 you know the details once we iron them out.

10 Please share your thoughts, concerns, 19:25:09
11 suggestions and anything else that you would
12 like us to know and consider on the online form
13 and at BEO -- I'm sorry, this is a new one,
14 BOESEAC, I believe that stands for Board of
15 Education Special Education Committee, at 19:25:28
16 CPS.EDU. If you're interested in continuing
17 engagement with us, please e-mail us at that
18 e-mail address.

19 If you know of people who couldn't
20 attend tonight but would like to be engaged, 19:25:40
21 please contact the Board Office at
22 (773) 553-1600.

23 Thank you all for coming, I really
24 appreciate it.



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(Whereupon, these were all the proceedings had at this time.)



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STATE OF ILLINOIS)
) SS:
COUNTY OF C O O K)

Karen Fatigato, being first duly sworn,
on oath says that she is a court reporter doing
business in the City of Chicago; and that she
reported in shorthand the proceedings of said
Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting,
and that the foregoing is a true and correct
transcript of her shorthand notes so taken as
aforesaid, and contains the proceedings given at
said Special Education Advisory Committee
Meeting.

Karen Fatigato



Karen Fatigato, CSR
LIC. NO. 084-004072



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<p>a-ha 8:6</p> <p>abilities 13:22 27:23</p> <p>ability 48:16</p> <p>able 11:19 13:22 14:6,7,10 18:23 34:1,2,13,15 38:21,22 39:5 46:8 48:3 51:22 52:23 58:1,2,3 59:16 61:1 62:15 63:6</p> <p>above-entitled 1:9</p> <p>Abreu 2:2 3:23 12:6,7 35:14 60:12,20</p> <p>accepting 8:20</p> <p>access 10:16 14:8 18:18 29:21 32:22 33:3 34:20 43:12,14 62:1,5,11 64:20</p> <p>accessibility 32:17 33:2</p> <p>accessible 12:19 18:2 32:18 33:23 34:1,6,22 64:18,22</p> <p>accomplish 9:21 13:12 17:12 23:16 24:7,12 25:3</p> <p>account 16:24 63:6</p> <p>achieve 14:6 31:22 46:14</p> <p>acknowledge 3:16,21 57:22</p> <p>acknowledged 47:15 52:6</p> <p>acronyms 34:23</p> <p>act 48:1 52:13 57:12</p> <p>acting 15:1</p> <p>action 18:12</p> <p>active 28:21</p> <p>activities 36:7 48:14</p> <p>actual 20:4</p> <p>additional 56:21</p> <p>address 66:18</p> <p>addresses 51:20</p> <p>ADHD 51:18</p> <p>adjourn 4:11</p> <p>administration 40:16</p> <p>administrator 5:1</p> <p>adult 19:4 52:20</p> <p>adults</p>	<p>52:18</p> 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