

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
CITY OF CHICAGO  
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
(Zoom)  
held on  
November 8, 2023

STENOGRAPHIC REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS  
had in the above-entitled cause held virtually  
via Zoom, commencing at 6:04 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

MS. MARY FAHEY-HUGHES, Special  
Education Advisory Committee Chairwoman

Reported By: Karen Fatigato, CSR

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(Whereupon, the following  
proceedings commenced at  
6:04 p.m.)

MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Good evening,  
welcome to the Chicago Board of Education's  
Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting.  
Notice of this meeting was posted on November  
6th, 2023 or at least 48 hours before this  
meeting at the James Monroe Elementary School,  
Board -- and Board Office at One North Dearborn  
and 42 West Madison Lobby and on WWW.CPSBOE.ORG.  
Today is November 8th, 2023. We are holding  
this meeting in the James Monroe Elementary  
annex cafeteria. I am Mary Fahey Hughes.

I would also like to acknowledge the  
Committee members who are here tonight. Barb  
Cohen, Christine Palmieri, Jim Cavalero,  
virtually, Nicole Abreu Shepard is on my right,  
Rachel Arfa, Stephanie Anderson, Frank Lally,  
Katherine Buitron-Vera, and we also have Amanda  
Klemas from Equip For Equality here today.  
Kimberly Watson Dodd is joining us virtually,  
and Dee Fedrick is also joining us virtually.

I'd like to also acknowledge Board

18:04:08

18:04:25

18:04:49

18:05:13



1 President Jianan Shi , who, while not a member of  
2 the Committee, has joined virtually on behalf of  
3 the Chicago Board of Education. Thank you for  
4 joining us tonight.

5 The order of the meeting will be as 18:05:47  
6 follows: Committee updates, a presentation by  
7 Alma Advisory Group, Committee discussion and  
8 questions and adjournment.

9 Before we begin, I would like to  
10 welcome Mary Beth Patizonin (phonetic), 18:05:59  
11 administrator in charge of James Monroe  
12 Elementary School to say a few words.

13 MS. PATIZONIN: Good evening and  
14 welcome to Monroe. I am not the principal of  
15 this fabulous school , he is on a paternity 18:06:28  
16 leave, so I will be filling in here, like my  
17 friend here, until the end of January.

18 Monroe is one of the largest and oldest  
19 neighborhood schools in Logan Square, a  
20 beautiful facility, as you can see, with this 18:06:47  
21 annex, we have a new turf field, we have new  
22 playgrounds, and the main building which houses  
23 3rd through 8th grade, and the annex is our  
24 primary area. Monroe is fortunate enough to



1 partner with Metropolitan Family Services  
2 Community and Schools to offer programming  
3 Monday through Friday as well as weekends in  
4 volleyball, cross country, chess clubs, dance  
5 clubs. If you look around you can see the 18:07:18  
6 different organizations that meet after school  
7 partnering with Beverly Arts Center, we have  
8 Community School Ballet, Folk Lore de Chicago,  
9 Puerto Rican Arts Alliance so we can celebrate  
10 the heritage of the community. 18:07:37

11 I think that's it for me. I would like  
12 to -- a few housekeeping items. The restrooms  
13 are at the end of this hall. If you have to  
14 leave the meeting, you can exit through the  
15 doors that you entered, door 11. And at this 18:07:51  
16 point I'm going to turn it back to Mary Fahey  
17 Hughes and welcome.

18 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Thank you.

19 Moving on. Details for our upcoming  
20 Special Education Advisory Meetings will be 18:08:06  
21 posted on [WWW.CPSBOE.ORG](http://WWW.CPSBOE.ORG). We also encourage you  
22 to e-mail [BOESEAC@CPS.EDU](mailto:BOESEAC@CPS.EDU) with my comments,  
23 questions or suggestions. We really want to  
24 hear from you.



1           Let's now proceed with public comment.  
2           As a reminder, union representatives are  
3           allotted ten minutes to speak before public  
4           participation and any elected officials will  
5           speak after the conclusion of public  
6           participation.

18:08:37

7           For the record, I would like to note  
8           that advance registration to speak at the  
9           Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting  
10          began on Monday, November 6th, 2023 at 10:00  
11          a.m. and closed on Tuesday, November 7th, 2023  
12          at 5:00 p.m. or until all five out of five slots  
13          for speakers or 100 slots for observers were  
14          filled, whichever occurred first. Individuals  
15          who registered to speak will have 2 minutes to  
16          comment, and I will call speakers in the order  
17          of registration.

18:08:48

18:09:07

18          Members of the public may submit  
19          written comments on this proposal via the  
20          Written Comments Form on the Board's website  
21          WWW.CPSBOE.ORG or mailed to One North Dearborn,  
22          Suite 950, by 5:00 p.m., Thursday, November 9th,  
23          2023.

18:09:18

24          There are no public participants who



1 registered to speak so we will now proceed with  
2 the Subcommittee updates. The Subcommittee  
3 designees will give an update starting with the  
4 Culture of Special Education in CPS Subcommittee  
5 Dee Fedrick, please provide an update. You can  
6 president star 6 to unmute.

18:09:52

7 MS. FEDRICK: Can you all hear me?

8 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Yes.

9 MS. FEDRICK: Wonderful. Again, my  
10 name is Dee Fedrick, I apologize that I couldn't  
11 be there with you all today. I am the co-chair  
12 of the Culture of Special Education  
13 Subcommittee.

18:10:04

14 In the Culture of Special Education  
15 Subcommittee we discussed that there's often a  
16 lack of trust between families of students with  
17 disabilities and the District. There are also  
18 children with disabilities who have had  
19 exceptionally positive special educational  
20 experiences. We want people to trust CPS and  
21 believe that it is a good school district, but  
22 to do that we need to name the things that  
23 undermine the delivery of effective special  
24 education, address what is not working and make

18:10:17

18:10:31



1 changes that will improve student and family  
2 experience and improve student outcomes.

3 So we know that CPS families who have  
4 children with disabilities have varying levels  
5 of satisfaction with amount of quality and 18:10:58  
6 delivery of the special education services their  
7 children receive, but we have very little data  
8 from families and caregivers of the specifics of  
9 their levels of satisfactions across the  
10 District. We want to know what is working and 18:11:12  
11 what is not working from a parent/caregiver  
12 perspective and are working out the details as  
13 to how we will move forward to get this data,  
14 and we will update you on it in the near future.

15 We want a system that uplifts and 18:11:28  
16 honors students with disabilities exactly as  
17 they are loud and proud. Treating students with  
18 dignity and respect begins with acknowledging an  
19 individual's student disability so that they may  
20 get the special education services they need to 18:11:44  
21 thrive and grow. We're looking into  
22 transferring some of the language the District  
23 uses when speaking about students with  
24 disabilities and we'll have more on that later.



1 Thank you.

2 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Thank you, Dee,  
3 for that update.

4 I will give the next -- I will give the  
5 next update from the High School in Transition  
6 Subcommittee. 18:12:06

7 We identified a number of areas we'd  
8 like to address, improve -- 1: Improved access  
9 to high school programs. First, any parent of  
10 an 8th grader knows the anxiety that bubbles up  
11 at this time of year around GoCPS and the high  
12 school application and acceptance process. When  
13 you have a child with a disability, it is even  
14 more complicated. I found out today at a  
15 meeting about changes to this year's GoCPS  
16 process that I was absolutely thrilled to hear  
17 about. And these changes may expand  
18 opportunities for students with disabilities for  
19 varying high school programs across CPS. 18:12:28

20 At the same time there are still  
21 barriers to access that are based on test  
22 scores, and I'm not even talking about selective  
23 enrollment. Given the learning challenges that  
24 come with a disability, it only makes sense that 18:12:42

18:13:03



1 many of the lower scoring students may have IEPs  
2 due to lower test scores. It means that a  
3 student couldn't face -- I'm sorry, given the  
4 learning challenges that come with a disability,  
5 it only makes sense that some students may have  
6 an IEP. Do lower test scores mean that a  
7 student can't be successful in a given program  
8 that meets their interests? Not necessarily.  
9 So we're thinking about ways to expand access to  
10 appropriate programs for students with  
11 disabilities.

18:13:33

18:13:54

12 Second, there is so much mystery around  
13 High School in Transition program options for  
14 students with disabilities. It's not until you  
15 get there that you start questioning what is  
16 available for my child. Parents do not know  
17 what's fully available. We believe that there  
18 should be more clarity around cluster high  
19 school and transition programs like what are all  
20 the options? Where are they? Who do they  
21 serve? And what happens if I take a diploma at  
22 12th grade versus attending a transition  
23 program?

18:14:07

18:14:24

24 Third, parents need education on their



1 rights and what they can expect in navigating  
2 special education in CPS. What a parent needs  
3 to know coming out of early intervention is very  
4 different from a parent who is looking at  
5 transition and beyond. We want to think ways to  
6 develop age-specific training and other  
7 materials that will support families on their  
8 journey with CPS.

18:14:50

9 The next update is from the Literacy  
10 Subcommittee. Barb Cohen, please provide an  
11 update.

18:15:07

12 MS. COHEN: Hi, I'm Barb Cohen, I'm a  
13 parent of two CPS graduates, a special education  
14 policy analyst at the Legal Council for Health  
15 Justice and the co-chair of the Literacy  
16 Subcommittee.

18:15:25

17 Research suggests that 95 percent of  
18 students are capable of learning to read.  
19 Research also indicates that as many as 20  
20 percent of our students have specific learning  
21 disabilities. These students are capable of  
22 learning to read well but only with proper  
23 instruction. Our subcommittee recognizes  
24 literacy as a complex, expansive issue requiring

18:15:38



1 coordination among many departments and  
2 stakeholders, but we also recognize the need to  
3 start somewhere within our purview. Therefore,  
4 as our first priority, we're thinking through  
5 what a marketing plan would look like to raise  
6 awareness of specific learning disabilities  
7 among general education teachers and parents  
8 with a quick one-page graphic that describes the  
9 characteristics of children who may have  
10 dyslexia. Some of these characteristics are  
11 noticeable even in preschool students well  
12 before they're expected to know their alphabet  
13 and letter sounds. Other characteristics become  
14 evident as children grow through elementary and  
15 middle school. Our intention is to have our  
16 graphic posted in the office of all schools  
17 where parents and teachers can both notice it.

18:16:04

18:16:20

18:16:31

18 In addition, we want to include a QR  
19 code that leads teachers and parents to  
20 high-quality resources that help them address  
21 concerns around identification, MTSS evaluation  
22 and IEP support when appropriate.

18:16:44

23 The second idea we're thinking through  
24 is a Frequently Asked Questions document for



1 parents. Many parents who have students with  
2 specific learning disabilities have said that  
3 they did not get helpful information from CPS in  
4 trying to get supports for their kids. This is  
5 an issue of equity, transparency and education  
6 of stakeholders. 18:17:08

7 And finally our third thought is about  
8 the viability of CPS offering extended school  
9 year programming specifically focused on Wilson  
10 instruction. Foundational skills instruction 18:17:24  
11 for students with characteristics of dyslexia  
12 require greater repetition and intensity in  
13 instruction than schools can easily offer during  
14 the school year, and an intensive  
15 five-day-a-week summer program could 18:17:40  
16 significantly improve these students' skills.

17 Thank you.

18 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Thank you, Barb.

19 All right. Now, I will give the update  
20 on the -- from the LRE Subcommittee. 18:17:49

21 So what we discussed with respect to  
22 least restrictive environment is this, that most  
23 of the concerns around LRE are related to  
24 behaviors that disrupt the learning in the



1 classroom. Students who have destructive  
2 behaviors often get moved to more restrictive  
3 environments rather than being supported in  
4 learning -- and learning to manage their  
5 behaviors in the least restrictive environment.

18:18:16

6 There are evidence-based practices that have  
7 been shown to improve student behavior. We are  
8 sourcing the idea that every teacher and staff  
9 member could benefit from more extensive  
10 training in behavior management of students as  
11 well as direct support in the classroom. If  
12 behavior is adequately addressed, it helps the  
13 whole ecosystem of a school.

18:18:31

14 That concludes the reports.

15 Are there any questions about what we  
16 discussed or our proposals or updates?

18:18:48

17 Yes, sorry, we'll get to the chief  
18 subcommittee later, yeah, right. So any  
19 thoughts -- I know not everyone was in every  
20 subcommittee except me. So may --

18:19:18

21 UNKNOWN PERSON: May I?

22 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Yeah, go ahead.

23 UNKNOWN PERSON: I don't know how close  
24 I have to be to this thing.



1 I think I just jotted down when it came  
2 to Culture of Special Education in CPS if there  
3 would be capacity to maybe also in addition to  
4 parent and caregivers for students that are --  
5 that it would be accessible to to also get data  
6 from students.

18:19:45

7 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Oh, yes. Yeah, I  
8 think that would be great.

9 UNKNOWN PERSON: Yeah, just thinking  
10 about how like they take the whatever, they take  
11 the five essentials or whatever starting in  
12 middle school, something maybe similar to that  
13 experience. And then I don't know if also staff  
14 is going to be included in -- from -- I don't  
15 know, from that perspective.

18:19:54

16 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Yeah, it's a work  
17 in progress so we can definitely discuss that  
18 option.

18:20:08

19 All right. Any other thoughts?

20 MS. PALMIERI: Did we discuss as a  
21 member of the culture and subcommittee culture  
22 and sort of the customer service experience in  
23 CPS?

18:20:24

24 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Please, go ahead.



1 MS. PALMIERI: Part of what the role of  
2 the survey would be to find out and get more  
3 information on what the experience is of an  
4 actual parent or family or guardian going  
5 through the process.

18:20:46

6 On top of that we had talked about, and  
7 I don't know if it was reviewed, the name  
8 ODLSS --

9 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Yes.

10 MS. PALMIERI: -- and just talking  
11 about -- so like even with our survey for the  
12 chief, when passing it out usually the first  
13 question of many families was what is ODLSS,  
14 right. But when you said, oh, this is for the  
15 head of special education they knew exactly what  
16 that is. So one of the things that we've been  
17 talking about is how can we revert back to  
18 something that's more like Office of Special  
19 Education.

18:20:56

18:21:09

20 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Right, I think  
21 some of the things we talked about were that the  
22 current terminology is not necessarily accurate  
23 and we're dealing with students with  
24 disabilities, and naming that actually puts more

18:21:18



1 direct focus on the fact that they have  
2 disabilities and they have needs surrounding  
3 those disabilities. So I think that's  
4 definitely in the hopper as well, more  
5 discussion about that.

18:21:52

6 Any thoughts about the other proposals?

7 MS. BUITRON-VERA: From the Literacy  
8 Committee something that we discussed too was  
9 making all the materials available in different  
10 languages and relying on CPS marketing to make  
11 easy visible, easy to read, easy to follow, easy  
12 to access in all languages that we cover for the  
13 schools and maybe considering sharing with  
14 principals to sharing their newsletters, as well  
15 as making it available in -- for parents to  
16 access it through social media.

18:22:16

18:22:35

17 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Yes. I think  
18 along those lines one of the kind of overarching  
19 things in all of these groups is that there's  
20 kind of -- its delivery is uneven across the  
21 District. Some people have tremendously  
22 wonderful experiences and some do not, and  
23 oftentimes it's directly related to their  
24 understanding of special education in general.

18:22:56



1 So I think that that is one thing that we really  
2 want to punch up for families so that they have  
3 a roadmap from starting -- you know, from early  
4 intervention through transition and beyond  
5 because there are so many questions along the  
6 way that are currently obfuscated or they're  
7 so -- they're just not out in front. So I think  
8 that's something that we're looking at in each  
9 group is trying to come up with some meaningful  
10 marketing, I hate to say marketing materials,  
11 but materials that have that kind of easy  
12 language and are more accessible to people.

18:23:35

18:23:56

13 Any other thoughts?

14 MS. FEDRICK: May I say something,  
15 Mary?

18:24:18

16 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Please.

17 MS. FEDRICK: I know one thing we also  
18 discussed real heavily yesterday in our  
19 Subcommittee meeting is the fact that we need to  
20 have more -- what's the word I'm looking for?  
21 More of a fluid conversation amongst providers,  
22 such as, OTs, PTs, SECAs, classroom teachers  
23 just about what's going on with the child as far  
24 as the services they're getting and just a more

18:24:28



1 collaborative effort because it was shared that  
2 the SECAs do kind of put in a good knowledge of  
3 that child, but the providers sometimes skip  
4 over that and just go straight to the teacher.  
5 So just a more fluid conversation and more open  
6 dynamic between all support staff within the  
7 classroom.

18:25:00

8 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Thank you, Dee.

9 Along those lines, another thing that  
10 came up in our conversation yesterday was how  
11 SECA training is so important because they are  
12 so directly related to giving service to our  
13 children, they often know our children the best  
14 out of anyone, and they have valuable data to  
15 contribute to the discussion of an IEP team. I  
16 know it's challenging to staff, IEP meetings,  
17 but I think there has to be -- or we should look  
18 into having SECAs have a voice at the table in  
19 support of the students and in support of best  
20 practices for what -- like in the best case  
21 scenario we want everyone there working to  
22 support the child, and I'd like to see us start  
23 from there and see what happens.

18:25:16

18:25:38

18:26:04

24 Please.



1 UNKNOWN PERSON: I think that that  
2 ideally would be wonderful and I think something  
3 that the schools are struggling with, myself,  
4 I'll just say what I'm struggling with, is that  
5 we often have a shortage with our SECAs because 18:26:41  
6 there's not a lot of substitutes for SECAs.  
7 There's more available -- I know there's a  
8 substitute issue, you know, across disciplines,  
9 but that is the position they have a hard time.  
10 So even if I have a bucket of funding that I 18:26:59  
11 allocate to sub out SECAs so that they may  
12 attend an IEP meeting or, you know, consult with  
13 a physical therapist or the speech pathologist,  
14 I won't have coverage for that person. And so  
15 often, you know, at least if a student in my 18:27:14  
16 setting has a dedicated paraprofessional, we  
17 will want them to be invited to the meeting.  
18 However, if the student doesn't want to attend  
19 that they're with during that period or during  
20 that time of their meeting then it's really hard 18:27:29  
21 to then, you know, discuss with the parent,  
22 well, they could be here but then, you know,  
23 nobody is with your student right now.  
24 So depending on, you know, the severity



1 of the reason that there's, you know, an adult  
2 with them, but sometimes that just can't happen.  
3 And, you know, honestly to me in my building  
4 that comes down to substitutes. And even if I  
5 have the funding and I have a bucket set aside  
6 for it, I can't even find substitutes just for  
7 the people that were sick in my building, you  
8 know, for that day. So I think it's a larger  
9 issue even if the building wants to do it, it's  
10 really difficult sometimes.

18:27:53

18:28:06

11 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Thank you.

12 I know the Talent Office is working on  
13 ways to bring in parent mentors, train them to  
14 be SECAs and then some of those SECAs are then  
15 being brought in to get their degrees in  
16 education, which is pretty amazing.

18:28:22

17 Any other thoughts?

18 So let's talk about what we'd like to  
19 see happen next, anything, for two minutes would  
20 be great.

18:28:55

21 MS. PALMIERI: I think one of the  
22 things just to circle back on understanding that  
23 there is vacancy issues and subbing issues with  
24 SECAs. We do see though with buildings who are



1 well covered, one of the things we talked about  
2 is in the principal newsletters that go out to  
3 administrators, some were having -- you know,  
4 sometimes the ODLSS updates are maybe at the  
5 bottom or maybe they skimmed through really  
6 quickly because there's just some much  
7 information on it, but making sure that there  
8 are ODLSS specific newsletters going to  
9 administrators without any other information on  
10 it so it's clear. And making it clear that,  
11 yes, if you have the opportunity your paras  
12 should be attending and your SECAs should be  
13 attending IEP meetings. And, yes, if you have  
14 the opportunity, you know, we experience a lot  
15 of administrators who do not want paras  
16 communicating with the parents, they want all  
17 communication either to go through the teacher  
18 or through the administrator and that makes it  
19 really hard to collaborate and for the parents  
20 to understand some of that qualitative data of  
21 the day-to-day and it puts the SECAs in a really  
22 tough position as well.

18:29:19

18:29:32

18:29:45

18:29:57

23 So we talked about on that area of just  
24 there's two issues. There's, one, the



1 availability of subs to attend and watch the  
2 student. But there's another issue of sort of  
3 just this lockdown of communication, and I think  
4 when it might -- you know, administrators might  
5 think that that's the best pathway, but it makes  
6 it harder for everybody in the long run.

18:30:21

7 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Thank you.  
8 Any other thoughts?

9 I think with respect to the SECAs that  
10 that parent collaboration is really important.  
11 And, you know, sometimes it comes down to the  
12 culture of a school, that's something that we  
13 talked about too in our group is that if you  
14 have a special ed friendly principal, things can  
15 go really great at a school. But sometimes  
16 they're I hate to say like considered an  
17 inconvenience to have a lot of students with  
18 disabilities and that's heartbreaking because  
19 so -- I truly believe that if students with  
20 disabilities needs are met, everyone's needs  
21 will be met. It's a culture that supports --  
22 supports a holistic view of everyone living  
23 together, everyone working together and that's  
24 something culture-wise I think it's worth

18:30:43

18:30:59

18:31:26



1 looking at.

2 MS. PALMIERI: I just had one more  
3 quick thought too. I don't know where this  
4 meeting was advertised or marketed on the CPS  
5 end, if it is just on the Board of Ed web page, 18:32:06  
6 but we need to do better to share on the CPS  
7 social media sites. We can share, but we're  
8 not -- you know, we only have a limited amount  
9 of stakeholder involvement and I am not a  
10 marketing genius, so for meetings moving forward 18:32:21  
11 we want to see public comment, we want to have  
12 families here, so we'll have to figure out how  
13 to better share the information on meeting dates  
14 and times.

15 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Agreed. 18:32:36

16 MS. FEDRICK: I agree with you only  
17 because the fact I've been hearing just  
18 different -- being city-wide I've been hearing  
19 different issues about just different special  
20 education teachers needing help and support and 18:32:50  
21 them saying, well, you know, where is the  
22 Special Education Advisory Committee, when are  
23 they meeting, I want to just have my voice and  
24 say something? But, you know, it's sad to say



1 but, you know, a lot of information gets passed  
2 out through Facebook. But I know that's not,  
3 you know, how people want to go about, but it is  
4 how a lot of information is spread nowadays is  
5 through Facebook. But there does need to be a 18:33:18  
6 bigger marketing -- not marketing but news brief  
7 on when we're meeting because our -- I mean, our  
8 colleagues are out there and their voices need  
9 to be heard as well.

10 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Great. 18:33:34

11 MS. BUITRON-VERA: On that note, what  
12 Christine was saying -- what you were saying,  
13 Mary, about the disconnect between the parent  
14 trying to get to the -- no, Christine was saying  
15 the parent trying to get with the SECA but some 18:33:46  
16 administrators want the parent to go to them.  
17 It actually is more work to the administrators.  
18 And when you find that principal that cherishes  
19 your special needs children, your student with  
20 disabilities, when you find that principal, that 18:34:05  
21 principal is gold. And I am very lucky that I  
22 have three of those as a parent. And that  
23 should be highlighted also widely through CPS,  
24 especially during this time of the year where



1 the GoCPS line is -- it's like a dooming line  
2 for a lot of people. And I always -- when  
3 people ask, they want to know what's the best --  
4 the bestest school, the bestest school is the  
5 one that is going to meet your children's need. 18:34:39  
6 If your kid has a hefty IEP and the needs of  
7 that IEP will be fulfilled at that school, that  
8 is the best school. It's not the name. It's  
9 not the reputation.

10 We need to start highlighting more of 18:34:53  
11 those programs, those principals and those  
12 communities where -- as a parent where I am  
13 right now, I feel happy, which I didn't have  
14 before. And that is something that I feel a lot  
15 of parents through the District have failed. 18:35:13  
16 They dread IEP meetings. They dread a call from  
17 the school. It shouldn't be like that, there  
18 should be open communication with the school.  
19 We should be, like Christine suggested, making  
20 that information available on a completely 18:35:30  
21 separate e-mail, otherwise it doesn't get read.  
22 It needs to be shared with the parents and it  
23 needs to be publicized more everywhere.

24 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Thank you, Kat.



1 All right. So moving on, the last  
2 update on the Chief of ODLSS Search Subcommittee  
3 will be via a presentation from Alma Advisory  
4 Group. They'll share updates on the executive  
5 search and findings from the community listening  
6 sessions that were hosted in September. I will  
7 turn it over to Alma to begin their  
8 presentation.

18:36:03

9 MS. FLOWERS: Thank you so much, Board  
10 Member Fahey Hughes. This is Sylvia Flowers  
11 from the Alma Advisory Group, and it is a  
12 pleasure to be here tonight to share with you a  
13 summary of the community feedback that we  
14 received.

18:36:16

15 Can everyone see the screen?

18:36:33

16 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: We've got  
17 handouts.

18 MS. FLOWERS: Great. Thank you.

19 So what I'd like to do over our time  
20 together is share a report out from our  
21 community engagement efforts and then want to  
22 share how that information informed the  
23 leadership profile and then conclude with a  
24 search update.

18:36:45



1           So I just want to start with reminding  
2 the group of our shared purpose. This was  
3 constructed with the Office of Talent, as well  
4 as with the Alma team. And our goal is to  
5 recruit, screen and select the next Chief of  
6 ODLSS for Chicago Public Schools. The Chief of  
7 ODLSS is the lead advocate for students with  
8 disabilities served by CPS. And the Chief of  
9 ODLSS works in collaboration with students,  
10 parents, CPS departments and other stakeholders  
11 to bring the highest standard of service to  
12 students.

18:37:22

18:37:40

13           Our purpose is to lead a search process  
14 that is transparent, guided by our community and  
15 designed to mitigate bias every step of the way.

18:37:54

16           MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Excuse me,  
17 Sylvia, could you share your screen?

18           MS. FLOWERS: Oh.

19           MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Thank you.

20           MS. FLOWERS: So we created two primary  
21 activities for community input, the first was  
22 our community gatherings, and then the second  
23 was the community survey. We scheduled four  
24 in-person and virtual gatherings, and the focus

18:38:10



1 of those meetings were to really engage in small  
2 group conversations with members of the  
3 community. We created small breakout groups so  
4 that people felt free to be as candid as  
5 possible and share their lived experiences with  
6 the District and with the Office of Diverse  
7 Learners and Student Supports.

18:38:51

8 And then the second was a survey that  
9 was available for I think about a month. In  
10 that survey we received over 800 responses, and  
11 I'll share a little bit about the feedback from  
12 those -- from that survey.

18:39:09

13 In our community conversations we asked  
14 the following questions: First, we always want  
15 people to dream big. What are the one or two  
16 things that are top of mind when you think about  
17 the kind of education you want for your child in  
18 CPS? And then we want to learn about the  
19 strengths of the District and the strengths of  
20 the office that will be important for the next  
21 chief to champion and protect.

18:39:28

22 Then we get into the areas of  
23 improvement, which is typically where most  
24 people want to go first, but we like to start

18:39:44



1 with strengths and really thinking about how we  
2 attract people to this role. And then we move  
3 into the skills and experiences that most people  
4 want to see in this next leader.

5 So from our community engagement 18:40:16  
6 efforts, as I mentioned we had four meetings,  
7 and there were over 70 participants both in  
8 person and virtually across those four meetings.

9 In the survey we saw nearly a third of our  
10 survey respondents, a little over a third, 40 18:40:38  
11 percent, were central -- were CPS staff members,  
12 either Central Office employees, teachers or  
13 licensed staff or support staff. We saw about  
14 10 percent of the respondents were either  
15 students or CPS alum. And nearly 20 percent of 18:40:59  
16 our respondents were residents or represented  
17 community partner organizations. And then  
18 nearly 25 percent were parents in CPS, so either  
19 parent/caregiver, a parent or caregiver of a  
20 student with an IEP or a 504 Plan or a parent of 18:41:24  
21 a future CPS -- a future CPS student.

22 When we looked at the race ethnicity  
23 across our survey respondents, we saw that the  
24 survey responses more closely represented the



1 city demographics. There were areas where we  
2 would have wanted to see the survey more closely  
3 match the student demographics. For example,  
4 the Latinx responses were slightly --  
5 significantly lower than the District student  
6 demographics, and so that's an area where we  
7 would have wanted to see a little bit more  
8 representation.

18:42:03

9 We also asked whether or not the  
10 respondents self-identified as having a  
11 disability, and we saw a little over 20 percent  
12 identified as having a disability and then 13  
13 percent preferred not to answer.

18:42:24

14 So what did we learn? So we heard --  
15 we asked about areas of improvement, and while  
16 there were some differences in the level of  
17 priority, these four areas emerged as top  
18 priorities for parents, staff and -- across  
19 parents and staff as well as all respondents.  
20 Those were, you know, supporting the health and  
21 well-being of staff, meeting students' social  
22 and emotional needs was a top priority for  
23 almost all categories, then ensuring student  
24 safety while in school and then improving

18:42:44

18:43:06



1 communication between the District office,  
2 schools and families.

3 When we looked across various  
4 demographic indicators, and so here we looked at  
5 race ethnicity as well as whether or not the 18:43:41  
6 respondent identified as having a disability.  
7 And then we also are showing the income level of  
8 the respondents. We saw the similar -- similar  
9 priorities as the previous slide, but we would  
10 add closing the achievement gap and graduation 18:43:59  
11 rate between students of color and white  
12 students as well as improving student academic  
13 performance. These sort of emerged across these  
14 demographics.

15 MS. ARFA: Hi, Sylvia, this is Rachel 18:44:18  
16 Arfa. I just wanted to make sure as you're  
17 going through the slide that you describe the  
18 different graphs. As part of disability  
19 etiquette make slides accessible, one way to do  
20 that is read the information on the slide for 18:44:34  
21 people who are participating. Thank you.

22 MS. FLOWERS: Thank you.

23 So we also asked some open-ended  
24 questions in our survey, and when we looked



1 across those open-ended -- that open-ended  
2 question, which was, ODLSS will be successful if  
3 we accomplish these three things within the next  
4 three years. We categorized all of the  
5 responses, and we found that 38 percent of the  
6 people who completed this open-ended response  
7 indicated that recruiting teachers, filling  
8 staff vacancies to ensure adequate staffing,  
9 reduced class sizes, case loads and paying  
10 teachers more to retain them was mentioned by  
11 about 38 percent of respondents.

18:45:19

18:45:40

12 The next sort of highest category was  
13 listening to staff, providing supports and  
14 professional development and creating a  
15 collaborative and positive environment and  
16 culture. About 36 percent of the open-ended  
17 respondents were in that category.

18:45:57

18 Next was improving curriculum, learning  
19 tools, academic and life outcomes for students  
20 in closing academic achievement gaps. About a  
21 third of the -- 25 percent, a quarter of the  
22 open-ended responses to that question sort of  
23 fell into that category.

18:46:14

24 Next was ensuring adequate funding and



1 resources so that staff can provide students  
2 with what they need. About 16 percent of the  
3 responses were in that category.

4 And then lastly 15 percent of the  
5 open-ended responses were really around  
6 communication and having better communication  
7 amongst all stakeholders and improving -- in  
8 improving transparency.

9 The last open-ended question in the  
10 survey was what would make the ODLSS Chief  
11 selection process more inclusive? And nearly 42  
12 percent -- approximately 42 percent of people  
13 who responded to that open-ended question said  
14 that including more stakeholders in the process,  
15 especially teachers, clinicians and support  
16 staff working directly with students, parents,  
17 service providers and members of ODLSS would  
18 make this process more inclusive. And we can  
19 talk a little bit about the search -- the search  
20 itself toward the end.

21 About 14 percent said that ensuring  
22 that the candidate is based on demonstrated  
23 experience, evidence of success and measurable  
24 results was really important to them and would

18:46:46

18:47:06

18:47:29

18:47:46



1 make this process more inclusive.

2 Twelve percent said that having more  
3 frequent and transparent communications about  
4 the selection process is important to them in  
5 ensuring a more inclusive process. And I know  
6 that we have a dedicated website -- web page for  
7 the search, and I believe after today's meeting  
8 we will be posting this report out back on the  
9 website so that people will hear what was  
10 reported.

18:48:12

18:48:32

11 And then lastly providing  
12 opportunities, such as, town halls,  
13 meet-and-greets where stakeholders can directly  
14 ask candidates questions and get to know them  
15 was mentioned by about 12 percent of the  
16 open-ended responses.

18:48:44

17 The next open-ended response was is  
18 there anything else you would like to share  
19 about the search and selection of the next Chief  
20 of ODLSS?

18:49:03

21 Twenty-nine percent of respondents who  
22 completed this question said that we're seeking  
23 a candidate who has deep experience as a teacher  
24 with diverse learners and specifically in



1 special education. So people specifically  
2 called out wanting someone who was an  
3 experienced special education educator.

4 Thirteen percent wanted a candidate who  
5 is supportive of teachers licensed and support  
6 staff. So it was a common theme among 13  
7 percent of those open-ended responses that the  
8 candidate should be supportive of teachers and  
9 staff.

10 Ten percent of those responses were  
11 categorized as someone who has knowledge of the  
12 issues in Chicago Public Schools. So it was  
13 important that the candidate has strong  
14 knowledge of the issues in Chicago Public  
15 Schools.

16 And then lastly 7 percent of the people  
17 who completed this question said that we needed  
18 in general to have more open communication and  
19 transparency both during the search and after  
20 for the next chief. And that was similar to the  
21 previous slide as well. This concept of  
22 transparency and open communication and sharing  
23 information was a consistent theme.

24 Okay, next slide.

18:49:32

18:49:48

18:50:05

18:50:20



1           So the survey also asked about the  
2 skills and attributes for the next chief by  
3 stakeholder group. And so what you'll see on  
4 this slide are all responses -- respondents in  
5 the darker blue, parents of CPS students in the  
6 medium shade of blue, parents of a student with  
7 an IEP or 504 Plan in the light blue, teachers  
8 or licensed staff in the dark purple and Central  
9 Office staff in the lighter purple. And there  
10 were five skills and attributes that rose to the  
11 top across all of these stakeholder groups.

18:50:54

18:51:16

12           The first was putting the interest of  
13 students -- putting the best interest of  
14 students first in all decisions.

15           The next was creating an inclusive  
16 environment for students and staff.

18:51:31

17           The next was seeking and responding to  
18 feedback from students, parents and staff.

19           The next was being a strong, clear  
20 communicator.

18:51:46

21           And then the last was being  
22 collaborative and skilled at managing competing  
23 priorities.

24           And you will see for different



1 stakeholder groups there were some that were  
2 higher than others. So, for example, for  
3 parents of a student with an IEP or 504, putting  
4 the best interest of students first, seeking and  
5 responding to feedback from students, parents  
6 and staff and then being a strong and clear  
7 communicator were the top three for parents.

18:52:13

8 For teachers, we saw putting the  
9 interest -- best interest of students first in  
10 all decisions was number one. The second was  
11 being a strong and clear communicator. And then  
12 almost tied for third was creating an inclusive  
13 environment for students and staff, as well as  
14 being collaborative and being skilled at  
15 managing competing priorities.

18:52:33

18:52:53

16 And then Central Office staff saw the  
17 first two ranked really high for them, which was  
18 putting the best interest of students first in  
19 all decisions and creating an inclusive  
20 environment for students and staff. The next  
21 highest was and probably tied was being a strong  
22 and clear communicator and being collaborative  
23 and skilled at managing those competing  
24 priorities.

18:53:11



1           When we looked across the other  
2 demographic indicators, we saw these top --  
3 these six skills and attributes rise to the top.  
4 So in the dark blue bar you see all respondents.  
5 Next is the responses from people who identified  
6 as African American, Afro Caribbean or black.  
7 The light blue bar represents Hispanic American,  
8 Chicana or Latinx respondents. The dark purple  
9 bar are respondents who self-identified as  
10 having a disability. And then the light purple  
11 bar are respondents who identified as family  
12 income under \$50,000.

18:53:42

18:54:07

13           So what we saw across these demographic  
14 indicators were the following top six  
15 competencies or skills, putting the interest --  
16 the best interest of students first in all  
17 decisions. Creating an inclusive environment  
18 for students and staff. Maintaining a focus on  
19 diversity, equity and inclusion. Seeking and  
20 responding feedback from students, parents and  
21 staff. Being a strong, clear communicator. And  
22 being collaborative and skilled at managing  
23 competing priorities.

18:54:27

18:54:44

24           What we saw particularly for those who



1 identified as -- self-identified as having a  
2 disability, putting the best interest of  
3 students first in all decisions was number one.  
4 And then tied for the second spot looked to be  
5 creating an inclusive environment for students  
6 and staff, as well as being a strong and clear  
7 communicator.

18:55:19

8 When we look at our respondents whose  
9 family income was less than \$50,000, we saw the  
10 top two to three skills were around maintaining  
11 a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion,  
12 seeking and responding to feedback from  
13 students, parents and staff and creating an  
14 inclusive environment for students and staff,  
15 followed by being a strong and clear  
16 communicator, and then putting the best interest  
17 of students first in all decisions.

18:55:36

18:55:57

18 So we took all of this information in  
19 order to develop the job profile, the leadership  
20 profile specifically. And so when we synthesize  
21 all of our conversations across the focus  
22 groups, all of the responses and the feedback  
23 survey, both on the areas for improvement, as  
24 well as the skills and responsibilities that

18:56:22



1 we're looking for in this next leader, we  
2 described it as this, the CPS community wants a  
3 special education leader with demonstrated and  
4 measurable success who puts students first and  
5 understands the context of Chicago Public  
6 Schools. They want a leader who is able to  
7 ensure adequate resources, staff and support for  
8 the needs of students. A leader who is able to  
9 build, organize and develop a strong team and  
10 can recruit and retain teachers and clinicians  
11 to the District. We're also looking for someone  
12 who is visible and listens to understand and  
13 acts on input from the stakeholders. And a  
14 leader who views families, staff and community  
15 as assets to this work. We're looking for  
16 someone who builds a culture of continuous  
17 improvement and transparency, which includes  
18 professional development and training for staff  
19 and building leaders. And someone who ensures  
20 that programs and services are appropriately  
21 resourced to meet the academic, social/emotional  
22 and physical needs of diverse learners.

18:56:57

18:57:16

18:57:33

18:57:48

23 And I'll pause here to take any  
24 questions before we talk about the search and



1 where we are in the search process.

2 MS. PALMIERI: I guess I have some  
3 questions or maybe comments would be better.

4 So I think that right off the bat, so  
5 13 percent of the respondents to this survey 18:58:24  
6 were parents and 32 percent were staff, and I  
7 think that again it just goes back to many of  
8 the parents did not know what ODLSS was. Also,  
9 I would have liked to have seen shared the  
10 information on the town halls and the surveys 18:58:40  
11 shared more often. I know that it was shared on  
12 some of the CPS social media sites, but it was  
13 not as consistent as I would have liked to have  
14 seen it.

15 The town halls that were held, I know 18:58:51  
16 that, you know, it says that there were 70  
17 participants, I know that one of those was the  
18 family -- the ODLSS Family Advisory Board.

19 MS. FLOWERS: Yes.

20 MS. PALMIERI: And there was quite a 18:59:04  
21 few family members there, probably 40, that were  
22 there at the meeting for other reasons. I think  
23 that that presentation was a lot about what this  
24 consulting group would be doing. At the end it



1 was a great opportunity to get feedback from  
2 families, and I know that that particular  
3 meeting was structured in a way that there might  
4 not have been enough time. But I would have  
5 liked to see more meetings like that that were  
6 just for families to give feedback. I wish that  
7 was a better opportunity.

18:59:29

8 The other town halls, again, I think  
9 there were maybe three or four people who came  
10 to them, and I think that that's just a function  
11 of families not knowing about it. I think it's  
12 very telling that 102 staff members from Central  
13 Office filled out the survey. I think it's  
14 great, and I think it shows us that the new role  
15 for the chief, accountability is going to be a  
16 big factor. We saw a lot of turnover with  
17 management level and department level, amazing  
18 CPS people in Central Office, and we don't want  
19 to see that continue.

18:59:43

19:00:02

20 So I guess my comment would be on the  
21 town halls, if you found that, you know, that  
22 the high percentage of the responses were that  
23 they wanted, you know, families and stakeholders  
24 wanted involvement in the candidate selection

19:00:18



1 process, I think when we were talking about that  
2 in my head initially it would be something  
3 similar to when you have narrowed it down to two  
4 or three candidates that there would be a public  
5 forum and that there would be an opportunity for  
6 families and stakeholders just to come and  
7 listen, you know, back and forth a  
8 meet-and-greet style similar to what our prior  
9 ODLSS chief was doing multiple times throughout  
10 the nation when she was a candidate for the  
11 various roles that she was applying to.

19:00:45

19:01:02

12 So I guess that would just be my -- how  
13 are we responding to the findings that more  
14 people are requesting to be -- stakeholders are  
15 requesting to be a part of the final selection  
16 process?

19:01:17

17 MS. FLOWERS: That is a great segue to  
18 our next slide, and then I will invite the  
19 Office of Talent to talk about what those final  
20 interview stages will look like.

19:01:31

21 Any other comments before we talk and  
22 give a brief update on the search?

23 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Just something  
24 that I noticed is that a lot of what people are



1 Looking for is very much aligned with what this  
2 Committee is -- has been discussing, so that's  
3 encouraging.

4 Go ahead, Frank.

5 MR. LALLY: Hello. And hopefully this  
6 question will be answered with the next slide.  
7 But, you know, I'm just curious, it seems like  
8 from the surveys there's a clear picture that  
9 folks want someone who will be a champion for  
10 students and then also create a welcoming  
11 working environment for staff. And I'm curious  
12 because it seems like a few steps have already  
13 taken place to dwindle down the candidates and  
14 how I guess has that specific feedback played  
15 into the role of bringing the candidates down to  
16 the seven that we have currently.

17 MS. FLOWERS: Great. So I think that's  
18 an invitation to talk about the search process  
19 and where we are now.

20 So Alma's role in the search process is  
21 really on the recruiting and sourcing, and so we  
22 have posted the position. We are in stage 1 --  
23 well, what you see here are the different stages  
24 of the interview process. So there's the first

19:02:06

19:02:20

19:02:34

19:02:49



1 round, which is the Alma screen and first round  
2 interview. The second round interview, which is  
3 conducted by a CPS Interview Committee. The  
4 third round, which is also conducted by a CPS  
5 Interview Committee. And then the finalist  
6 round. What you see here is our prediction of  
7 the number of applicants that we would get at  
8 each stage.

19:03:26

9 So for the first round we estimated  
10 that based on the minimum requirements for the  
11 job that we would get between 20 or 30  
12 applicants for this role who met all of the  
13 qualifications. We received approximately 149  
14 applicants as of the time I created this  
15 presentation, it might be a little higher, and  
16 then 21 of those were invited to the first  
17 round. One of the screening questions was  
18 around whether or not the person already had the  
19 Illinois license or if they felt they would be  
20 eligible for the Illinois license. So that's  
21 what takes that number from 149 to really 21  
22 people who met that minimum requirement and were  
23 invited to a first round interview.

19:03:40

19:04:01

19:04:20

24 The first round interview is conducted



1 by a member of the Alma team, and we're really  
2 looking at the experience, the competencies and  
3 the alignment with the mission. The resume  
4 review is part of this, as well as a phone or  
5 virtual interview, so those are either done via  
6 phone or via Zoom. And then that initial  
7 licensure check, so making sure that they either  
8 have the Illinois license already or that they  
9 would be eligible for or willing to pursue that.

19:04:51

10 From there we recommend candidates for  
11 the second round. We discussed the 21  
12 candidates who were interviewed, and we  
13 recommended that seven of those move forward and  
14 are invited to the next round. That interview  
15 is conducted by the CPS Interview Committee.

19:05:07

16 The Alma team trained that Committee in our  
17 anti-bias training and worked with them to  
18 develop competency-based interview questions,  
19 and those interviews are in progress or are  
20 almost complete.

19:05:27

19:05:46

21 From there candidates will be invited  
22 to the third round of interviews where they will  
23 also receive a performance task. At this point  
24 this is when we begin to do some initial



1 background screening and then from there the  
2 pool will be narrowed to the finalist round. So  
3 we estimate there will be two to three  
4 candidates who will be brought forth into the  
5 final round.

19:06:16

6 That final round will include the CEO,  
7 the Chief Education Officer and members of the  
8 Subcommittee of this Special Education Advisory  
9 Committee. And I will invite the Office of  
10 Talent to talk a little bit more about how the  
11 feedback will be incorporated in the finalist  
12 round.

19:06:38

13 CHIEF FELTON: Hi. Excuse me, can you  
14 hear me?

15 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Yes. Thanks,  
16 Ben.

19:06:55

17 CHIEF FELTON: Hi, good to see  
18 everybody tonight. Thank you for your feedback,  
19 for your continued engagement. You know, we're  
20 pleased with the progress on the search. You  
21 know, specifically the survey itself, and I had  
22 a chance to attend some of the -- I think most  
23 of the community engagement forums, we collected  
24 a lot of good information from staff and

19:07:05



1 parents. We identified -- I'm getting a note  
2 that's saying my camera is off. There we go.  
3 Can you see me? Sorry about that. So we  
4 identified, you know, lots of different  
5 questions from staff, from parents, we  
6 identified themes, and then we worked with Board  
7 Member Hughes and the Board Subcommittee to  
8 determine questions to be used in each round of  
9 the screening. We really worked hard to map it  
10 against the different competencies and the  
11 leadership profile that we developed based on  
12 the feedback that we got from the Committee and  
13 from all of this engagement. And then we also  
14 worked with folks to -- we worked with the Board  
15 Subcommittee alongside our partners at Alma to  
16 develop the performance task so that it was  
17 clearly aligned with what we were hearing from  
18 the field.

19:07:32

19:07:50

19:08:03

19 So those are some of the ways that  
20 we've incorporated some of the feedback from  
21 both the Committee and the community and, you  
22 know, we're pleased that, you know, we're moving  
23 forward. I mean, you know all of you have deep,  
24 deep institutional knowledge about how hard it

19:08:14



1 can be to fill special education positions  
2 because there just really is a very limited  
3 supply of employees who, you know, are experts  
4 in this field. And so I'm pleased that we  
5 are -- you know, we've moved through the first  
6 few stages. We've done, you know, while  
7 certainly not perfectly done, you know, a fairly  
8 robust outreach to community, to ODLSS staff  
9 and, you know, so we're pleased that we are  
10 matric -- that we're sort of matriculating  
11 through this process more or less on task on --  
12 at the pace that we were hoping to throughout  
13 the process.

19:08:40

19:08:56

14 I'm happy to discuss anymore but, you  
15 know, again we're proceeding through the process  
16 and working, you know, really closely with Board  
17 Member Hughes and, you know, we're really  
18 grateful for the Subcommittee's support and  
19 engagement along the way.

19:09:12

20 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Thank you.

19:09:28

21 Something I just wanted to address,  
22 Christine, you mentioned that it would have been  
23 nice to have a forum for people to hear from the  
24 candidates, and I just wanted to say that we did



1 discuss doing that but one of the issues is that  
2 not all the candidates wanted it to be known  
3 that they are applying for this job because of  
4 their current employment.

5 MS. PALMIERI: Yeah, I think that it's  
6 actually very important, it actually says  
7 stakeholder engagement, and it says that the  
8 feedback you receive from families and  
9 stakeholders was that they wanted to be a part  
10 of the process. And if someone is interested in  
11 coming -- so because part of the role that is so  
12 important is regaining the trust of families and  
13 stakeholders after many years of the situation  
14 we've been in, I would also want to make sure  
15 that the candidate would feel comfortable coming  
16 into a town hall environment. And I don't know  
17 what that would look like, however, for other  
18 candidates in a role in a large district it is a  
19 public interview, the public is welcome to  
20 attend. There isn't interaction, but there's  
21 like a feedback survey after. And I don't know  
22 that any input from that survey goes into the  
23 decision-making process, but we have a report  
24 and graphs and a lot of data that shows that

19:09:56

19:10:09

19:10:26

19:10:42



1 stakeholders want involvement in this process,  
2 so I would expect that stakeholders get  
3 involvement in the process.

4 CHIEF FELTON: If I can jump in on that  
5 just briefly. You know, it's a good point, and 19:11:08  
6 we can, you know, take that under further  
7 consideration. I do think that there are, you  
8 know -- there are pluses and minuses to having a  
9 completely public interview process. You know,  
10 Christine, I think typically we see those 19:11:23  
11 types -- and I can defer to Alma on this because  
12 they run searches nationally all the time.  
13 Almost always when we're seeing a public search  
14 like that, you know, with a public round, we're  
15 talking about a superintendent or a chief 19:11:38  
16 executive officer, and so it's pretty rare that  
17 you would see a chief-level candidate for any  
18 role do the public interview round. But, I  
19 mean, it's a fair point, it's a good point.  
20 We've tried to make sure that we're engaging 19:11:56  
21 both the Committee -- sorry if you can hear my  
22 kids in the background. You can see, you know,  
23 we worked really hard to try to build in that  
24 community engagement throughout the process, but



1 we can continue to, you know, finalize our plans  
2 for the last round.

3 I do want to highlight that the plan is  
4 for Board Subcommittee members to have a -- an  
5 opportunity to meet the candidates and give us 19:12:25  
6 feedback on them. And then the other piece  
7 that's going to be really important is sort of a  
8 late addition to the slide is making sure that  
9 ODLSS staff, especially senior leadership, will  
10 also have an opportunity to connect with our 19:12:37  
11 candidate or candidates, our finalists, to make  
12 sure, you know, given the discussion around  
13 trust in the ODLSS Office, we thought that was  
14 really important too.

15 So long story short, I think there 19:12:49  
16 is -- there are pluses and minuses to having a  
17 completely, you know, public process. And, you  
18 know, like Board Member Hughes said, one of the  
19 minuses is that, you know, people might not want  
20 to, you know, have that public declaration of 19:13:00  
21 their candidacy but, you know, that's certainly  
22 something that we can continue to discuss and --  
23 as we go forward.

24 Thanks.



1 MS. FLOWERS: One thing that I would  
2 just add just listening to your comments and  
3 feedback, you know, for a district this size,  
4 the level of participation in the in-person  
5 meetings was much lower than we would have  
6 expected as well as the survey responses. So  
7 one thing I want to do is go back and add the  
8 end counts for the open-ended responses. So  
9 while you see the percentages there, I want to  
10 make sure that we're really clear on like the  
11 number of responses that actually called that  
12 out.

19:13:26

19:13:41

13 Typically in a survey when there's  
14 open-ended responses, usually if you have 800,  
15 some smaller subset, actually take the time to  
16 complete the open-ended responses, so I want to  
17 make sure that we hold some of this in context  
18 with that feedback. That's my first comment.

19:13:56

19 I think the ways that we have been  
20 talking with the Office of Talent around  
21 engaging stakeholders in the interview process,  
22 there is time to make adjustments. So I do take  
23 your feedback seriously, and when we are meeting  
24 we will think about those additional ways, as

19:14:16



1 Ben mentioned, perhaps bringing in staff and  
2 other stakeholders into the process.

3 So the last point is on this type of  
4 search. In Alma's search experience, the -- we  
5 don't necessarily do the town hall style of 19:14:55  
6 interviewing even for our superintendent  
7 searches. We spend a lot of time training any  
8 interviewer that is part of an Alma search in  
9 our anti-bias training and competency-based  
10 interviewing. So we don't necessarily have an 19:15:14  
11 open forum type of interview style, we would  
12 work with a district in a superintendent search  
13 to decide which interview panels they would like  
14 to have at a finalist round and then we would  
15 train anyone in that interview panel, whether 19:15:32  
16 it's student interview panel, whether it's a  
17 parent and community interview panel, a staff  
18 interview panel, central office in our process.  
19 We would develop competency-based questions  
20 along with -- alongside them, and then those 19:15:50  
21 interview panels would conduct the interviews.  
22 They would submit feedback, which would be  
23 summarized by Alma and submitted to the hiring  
24 manager for consideration.



1           So we find that the town hall style is  
2 not something that we necessarily recommend.  
3 And for a position that is a cabinet level  
4 position, we rarely see the town hall style  
5 being used. We might see -- after there's a  
6 selected candidate, you might have a  
7 meet-and-greet after the person is selected so  
8 that they can get to know and plan for -- it  
9 could be part of their on-boarding to have sort  
10 of a meet-and-greet style plan of entry that  
11 includes meeting various stakeholders in the  
12 first -- either before they join or in the first  
13 30, 60 or 90 days.

19:16:26

19:16:44

14           MS. PALMIERI: I think maybe a comment  
15 would be, so we're talking about the difference  
16 between a public interview, and I think that  
17 when we look at superintendent roles  
18 throughout -- that do do this, their district is  
19 significantly smaller. So we're talking about a  
20 chief of special education in a district as  
21 large as Chicago, I'm not necessarily saying a  
22 public interview town hall but some access for  
23 stakeholders between now and the final decision  
24 is very important. It's been identified in the

19:17:01

19:17:13



1 data that you provided. And I'd love to learn  
2 more too about like what barriers you think  
3 might be existing within CPS, on the CPS side.  
4 And I think that if I'm hiring -- you know, I  
5 understand that piece of it, however, if I am  
6 serious about taking a job and I am a candidate  
7 of two or three, then I am ready to make it  
8 clear that I am serious about leaving my current  
9 job and coming to another one.

19:17:39

10 UNKNOWN PERSON: I had a question. I  
11 mean, on this finalist round on the second  
12 bullet point it does say stakeholder engagement,  
13 so I guess I was curious as to what that planned  
14 stakeholder engagement that you guys already  
15 have on here was and what stakeholders you were  
16 talking about?

19:17:53

19:18:08

17 MS. FLOWERS: So we are still designing  
18 the process, I think it's been mentioned.

19 UNKNOWN PERSON: I just wanted to ask  
20 what that plan was.

19:18:24

21 MS. FLOWERS: So I think we're still  
22 designing the process, as Ben mentioned, we  
23 haven't gotten there yet in terms of scheduling.

24 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: I'm sorry?



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MS. ARFA: Could you stop the share screen so we can see people's faces at the screen?

MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Can you see it? All right. Thank you.

MS. PALMIERI: So like, for example, I think you mentioned that some of the feedback you've gotten is that you want to include ODLSS-based staff, which is great, and especially like the interim chief and the deputy chief in that final round. So it feels like you're getting feedback that that as a stakeholder should be -- that should be included in that finalist round. There is data here that says the feedback is the families should also be one of the stakeholders included in the finalist round.

MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Okay. Thank you. Anything else? Did you want to say something?

UNKNOWN PERSON: I guess I know that the LSC structure is pretty unique to Chicago Public Schools, I don't have the knowledge to know how widespread that is nationwide, but --

19:19:00

19:19:11

19:19:25

19:19:42



1 and I know principal is obviously a much smaller  
2 subset than the chief of ODLSS, but in that  
3 process the search -- you know, the LSC is the  
4 search committee and the interviewer and LSCs  
5 are trained and they are, you know, half parent, 19:20:05  
6 you know, there's a lot of parent representation  
7 there and they are parents who, yes, have  
8 received training and do all that to participate  
9 in that. And the final process as laid out by  
10 CPS for that particular thing is the finalists 19:20:20  
11 hold a, you know, a town hall or whatever they  
12 call it for those principals and questions --  
13 and the LSC poses questions not that are  
14 interview questions but like this is what our  
15 particular community wants to know about you, 19:20:38  
16 what your experience is, et cetera, after  
17 candidate statements. And the LSC is the one  
18 who ultimately decides but, you know, feedback  
19 is given, right.

20 So I guess that's sort of like the 19:20:51  
21 Chicago culture like that's very special to CPS  
22 about like our leaders, like, you know, and  
23 having it be more a community-based thing. And  
24 so I don't know to what level we can sort of



1 replicate that kind of deep community engagement  
2 on the level of a chief of ODLSS, but I do think  
3 that that's something that Chicago parents have  
4 come to expect.

5 MS. BUITRON-VERA: I think to what 19:21:24  
6 Christine had said, in the past CPS parents have  
7 received, not regarding the chief search,  
8 surveys from CPS. And I think all of us have  
9 heard from parents saying why do they send the  
10 survey if they ultimately end up making a 19:21:38  
11 decision that doesn't seem to be the decision  
12 that the parents -- the majority of parents  
13 voted for? If we already asked all these  
14 questions to parents and parents are excited  
15 about being part of this process, taking away 19:21:55  
16 some sort of participation to where the end  
17 actually it will perpetuate the distrust that  
18 exists with the connection of Central Office is  
19 once again making us do a survey where we  
20 actually don't have a say, and we're trying to 19:22:15  
21 break away from that.

22 So I would like to see that happening.  
23 Sometimes we've all participated in town halls  
24 where there's quick information given at the



1 school level, there's not necessarily a lot of  
2 interaction, but it's very important to have the  
3 face-to-face and allowing the parents to know  
4 you're a stakeholder, your voice matters just as  
5 much as the business people in Central Office. 19:22:46  
6 So this really needs to happen and it's already  
7 here. And we've already asked so just to  
8 amplify those voices.

9 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Thank you.

10 CHIEF FELTON: I'm sorry, go ahead. 19:23:02

11 MS. PALMIERI: And the distrust too,  
12 I'm like, well, what, are they afraid they would  
13 scare the candidates away? We're lovely. I  
14 think that if we don't give the candidates that  
15 opportunity at the get-go, then we are already 19:23:14  
16 backwards with trying to gain trust of families  
17 in the District.

18 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Thank you very  
19 much --

20 CHIEF FELTON: Could I just say one 19:23:22  
21 thing? Sorry.

22 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: -- for your  
23 input. I'm sure there will be more discussions  
24 about that.



1 MS. COHEN: Mary.

2 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Go ahead, Barb.  
3 I didn't see you.

4 MS. COHEN: That's okay. I want to  
5 change this subject completely. This is -- a 19:23:34  
6 personal thing is that I don't trust a lot of  
7 rhetoric that I hear in interviews, I think that  
8 you can frankly get a lot of it off of Chat GPT  
9 to find out what catch phrases people want to  
10 hear. So I am concerned about making a decision 19:23:50  
11 on many of the things that come out during  
12 interviews. And I think that a person's past  
13 experience is probably the best information we  
14 can gather about where their skills are going to  
15 be going forward. 19:24:12

16 And so my question is about the people  
17 with whom you're going to communicate that are  
18 colleagues of the person in their current job,  
19 and I first want to find out how many of those  
20 colleagues the interview team would be planning 19:24:27  
21 to interview. And second of all, how that  
22 happens if a person is interested in keeping  
23 their candidacy secret.

24 MS. FLOWERS: Ben, do you want me to



1 answer that?

2 CHIEF FELTON: Sure.

3 MS. FLOWERS: Okay. So typically when  
4 we get to the finalist stage we do ask for  
5 formal references. So at that point candidates 19:24:57  
6 are advised to let their references know that  
7 they are in a search process and they can let us  
8 know who they can contact before an offer is  
9 made and who they would want us to contact after  
10 an offer is extended but, of course, the offer 19:25:22  
11 is pending the completion of those formal  
12 reference checks. We would typically ask for  
13 anywhere between three to five references. We  
14 typically ask for at this level of a role a  
15 current or former supervisor, a current or 19:25:42  
16 former direct report, a current or former peer,  
17 a current or former partner, community partner,  
18 board member, parent. Those are the four  
19 categories that we typically give our  
20 candidates. 19:26:01

21 And, Ben, if there's anything that you  
22 want to add that would be Chicago specific that  
23 you would request of us, we'd certainly honor  
24 that as well.



1 CHIEF FELTON: Not specifically about  
2 that but just to the conversation, I want to be  
3 perfectly clear that, you know, we deeply value  
4 the opinions of the folks on the Subcommittee,  
5 on the Board, you know, the parents, everyone  
6 who has taken -- you know, ODLSS staff,  
7 everybody who has taken the survey, you know,  
8 we're -- we are, like I said, deeply grateful  
9 but also like we view this as an opportunity to  
10 do view things differently than we have before.

19:26:32

19:26:51

11 I think, you know, look, like we're  
12 working to sort of make sure that we can uphold  
13 the best practices of an executive search with  
14 the feedback that we're getting here. So I  
15 think it's appropriate for us to take some of  
16 the feedback that we heard tonight and try to  
17 implement it. At the end of the day, you know,  
18 this is a decision that the CEO and Chief  
19 Education Officer have to make and make a  
20 recommendation to the Board. But like the  
21 feedback and the input that we've gotten here  
22 tonight is valuable, and I think it's worth some  
23 conversations about how to make sure that we  
24 capture both parent voice and other perspectives

19:27:08

19:27:20



1 in the process.

2 I would also just call out that, you  
3 know, I've been the Chief Talent Officer for  
4 coming up on a year, I've been involved in the  
5 executive searches for two, three years now, you  
6 know, the level of engagement that we've had  
7 with the survey, you know, out in the community  
8 with the Board Subcommittee, you know, every  
9 interview question, every performance task, you  
10 know, we've been in constant communication with  
11 Board Member Hughes. You know, short of the CEO  
12 search a couple of years ago, you know, we've  
13 never done anything this, you know, this  
14 collaborative and cooperative with community,  
15 and I just want to call out Board Member Hughes  
16 for her leadership on this front and really  
17 helping us think through how we amplify the  
18 voices of the people who are most impacted by  
19 this decision. So which is just to say, like,  
20 you know, I hope that you feel from the Talent  
21 Office and from CPS that like we do really  
22 deeply value the input because we're doing this  
23 in a much more inclusive way than we ever have.

24 But there's been good feedback here

19:27:46

19:27:59

19:28:14

19:28:31



1 tonight, and I think there is an opportunity to  
2 both make sure that we're upholding the best  
3 executive search processes but then also  
4 continuing to get both the Subcommittee's input  
5 and additional input from the folks that you  
6 guys were referring to, specifically parents,  
7 staff and frankly students too. So, you know,  
8 I've been taking notes, my team is here doing  
9 the same thing, I think there's an opportunity  
10 to continue to implement some of this feedback  
11 as we finalize the last stage. And we're going  
12 to continue to be in constant communication with  
13 Board Member Hughes and the Subcommittee just to  
14 make sure that we're doing that. So thank you.

19:28:55

19:29:09

15 MS. PALMIERI: I have a question. So  
16 how do we, as a group, formalize our request, if  
17 it is the CEO and the CEO, even if it is  
18 something like the final candidates attend the  
19 ODLSS FAB meeting and simply introduce  
20 themselves and we heavily structure the meeting  
21 and the opportunity for back and forth, how do  
22 we formalize our strong --

19:29:27

19:29:41

23 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Can I say -- Ben,  
24 did you get this as a formal request from some



1 members?

2 CHIEF FELTON: Yes, I can quantify this  
3 as a formal request. I think what we ought to  
4 do -- I mean, the request is noted. I think  
5 what we ought to do is -- so, first of all, we 19:30:10  
6 do have -- we are working on scheduling meetings  
7 with the Subcommittee right now, so that's part  
8 of the process that's already built in. I think  
9 there is opportunity to have further discussion  
10 about whether that's, you know, specifically the 19:30:25  
11 FAB group, specifically, you know, a group of  
12 either employees or parents or even students  
13 that can be part of this process. So, you know,  
14 I think that's a conversation we're going to  
15 have to have both with Alma and internally and 19:30:45  
16 then come back to the Committee.

17 But, you know, Christine, your  
18 preference is noted, it's good feedback for us.  
19 And I think there is a way that we can both  
20 protect the integrity of the search and then 19:30:56  
21 also making sure that like we're bringing in as  
22 many stakeholders as we possibly can to make it  
23 feel like an open and inclusive process.

24 MS. PALMIERI: What's the timeline?



1 CHIEF FELTON: Well --

2 MS. PALMIERI: Sorry, I don't know if  
3 you heard me. What's the timeline for the next  
4 rounds?

5 CHIEF FELTON: So I think if we're  
6 going to elongate it, you know, we need to have  
7 that discussion. You know, my hope is that we  
8 can get something, you know, to the Board by --  
9 you know, ultimately have the CEO recommendation  
10 to the Board, which is sort of the technical  
11 process for appointing chief officers, you  
12 know -- you know, I'm going to say likely in  
13 January or February, by the January or February  
14 Board Meeting.

15 MS. PALMIERI: So that's --

16 CHIEF FELTON: My hope is that we can  
17 get it there by the January or February meeting.

18 MS. PALMIERI: So it's not December  
19 1st, it might be January or February, so it  
20 gives -- so if it wasn't December 1st -- if it's  
21 now changed, so it's November now and it's not  
22 December 1st now, it might be January 1st or  
23 February 1st, that gives us the opportunity for  
24 a parent FAB meeting in there.

19:31:15

19:31:29

19:31:44

19:31:53



1 CHIEF FELTON: Yeah, I think there's  
2 opportunity -- you know, I think we need to have  
3 a discussion about how we would structure it,  
4 but I think there's definitely an opportunity to  
5 engage different stakeholder groups, yeah.

19:32:14

6 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: So it was my  
7 understanding that we were trying to get someone  
8 in place for the December Board Meeting so we  
9 could vote on it then. I don't know if  
10 that's -- we'll have to have conversations about  
11 it, but I think that's also part of the --

19:32:29

12 MS. PALMIERI: I guess then my question  
13 would be when did we have the results of this  
14 survey that showed that -- so like, for  
15 example -- I'm not getting -- my feedback is  
16 noted, however --

19:32:45

17 MS. FEDRICK: Christine, I'm not trying  
18 to cut you off, but I also have a question. Can  
19 you all hear me?

20 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Yes.

19:33:04

21 MS. FEDRICK: I guess my main question  
22 is as a Subcommittee co-chair how are our voices  
23 being heard if we don't have any just knowledge  
24 of this person or just saying, oh, here's who



1 they recommended and that's it? I mean, we have  
2 no knowledge of this person or anything or like  
3 what they've done, it's just like, oh, well,  
4 this is who we're recommending and they're  
5 moving forward. It's like, you know, kind of no  
6 transparency yet again unless everything is kept  
7 in the dark.

19:33:37

8 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: I appreciate your  
9 comments, Dee. I think there are a lot of  
10 competing factors that have led to the schedule  
11 that's there, and I really appreciate that  
12 you're bringing these questions up, Christine  
13 and Nicole, that's kind of why you're here. So  
14 I'm not sure what will happen with this issue,  
15 but we'll have more conversations about it I'm  
16 sure.

19:34:03

19:34:28

17 MS. PALMIERI: When you go to the Board  
18 of Ed Meeting do you give a report about the  
19 discussion -- well, the Board of Ed Meeting will  
20 be in the middle of December.

19:34:41

21 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: Right.

22 MS. PALMIERI: We might have continued  
23 discussions about how we formalize our request.

24 MEMBER FAHEY HUGHES: So that would



1 likely require a vote, which would probably have  
2 to be on an agenda, I would think. But  
3 that's -- we'll find out.

4 So I appreciate everyone's input. And  
5 thank you, Alma, for your presentation. 19:35:10

6 Are there any other questions before we  
7 wrap things up?

8 Okay. Well, thank you all for coming.  
9 And I appreciate everyone's point of view and  
10 understand the frustration and also am watching 19:35:28  
11 this somewhat speeded up process to hire this  
12 person for ODLSS and, yeah, we'll have more  
13 conversations about it.

14 So with that, thank you all for coming.  
15 I am hopeful, like I have never been before, 19:36:03  
16 that we're moving in a good direction with this  
17 Committee and we have a lot more to do. So  
18 onward and thanks everyone for coming.

19 (Whereupon, these were all the  
20 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  
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 meeting.

*Karen Fatigato*



Karen Fatigato, CSR  
LIC. NO. 084-004072



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