

**March 20, 2025, Board Meeting Written Comments
Received between Tuesday, March 18th and Friday, March 21st Submitted via
Written Comments Form**

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| 1 | Why is the Board of Education Dysfunction in the Local school Council in the Chicago Public's School? |
| 2 | I feel that Tax Increment Financing has unfairly taken millions out of the monies originally intended to finance city and county services. Therefore, I oppose the increase in the Pilsen TIF, |
| 3 | <p>Not only a second chance but a BETTER chance! The idea that a school district such as Youth Connection Charter School (YCCS) has created a system of learning and support goes unnoticed. Students entering into YCCS schools are students dropped from traditional learning environments where they are forgotten and ignored. Having a second and better chance through YCCS advances students to greater heights and achievements that challenge the status quo.</p> <p>On behalf of YCCS, this testimony is to confirm that I wholeheartedly support the network and its processes for renewal. YCCS strides have been to increase academic success for all learners. Skilled-driven practitioners are hired to advance students through multifaceted learning systems and platforms. Students enrolled at YCCS campuses are projected to successfully earn a high school diploma and develop skills for any post-secondary option of the student's choice.</p> <p>YCCS schools prepare students by offering a unique blend of academic rigor, specialized programs, and flexibility in teaching methods. It is proven that YCCS focuses on high academic standards and college preparation. They use innovative curricula tailored to student needs and host small class sizes to allow for personalized attention. YCCS teachers have more autonomy to adapt lessons for different learning styles and incorporate project-based learning, technology, and hands-on activities to make education more engaging. Most importantly, parents often play an active role in governance and decision-making while community partnerships enhance learning experiences outside the classroom.</p> <p>Again, I fully support YCCS! YCCS accountability and performance are evident not only by meeting various metrics or data points but also through learning practices that are fit for students and families. Parents can choose a school that best fits their child's learning style and needs at any YCCS campus. YCCS offers specialized programs that may not be available in a standard CPS school. And, YCCS maintains smaller class sizes, which allows for more individualized instruction implementing targeted interventions for students who are behind. In closing, my support to renew YCCS contract will be rewarding for current and future students wanting to graduate from any YCCS campus.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Dear CPS Board,</p> <p>I am a parent of two CPS high school students. I write to oppose the district taking on more debt. I and numerous fellow CPS parents I know support CEO Martinez in his call for responsible spending and oppose amending the budget to accommodate a union contract that has not been finalized. Borrowing to pay for operations and/or pension costs will only make the entire endeavor cost more overall, as growing debt eats away at future budgets.</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>Please hold your ground and not borrow to cover the pension costs that the City should - and can - pay, despite the Mayor's claims. The call for an elected school board claimed that it would lead to a more democratic and independent board. It's time for the board to be just that - independent - and resist racking up even more debt, which will only harm future generations of CPS students.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p> |
| 5 | I OPPOSE the Pilsen TIF Expansion. TIFS take money away from public schools each year! Stop the grift. NO MORE TIFs! |
| 6 | <p>Dear Chicago Board of Education Members,</p> <p>We, the residents, parents, and graduates of Chicago Public Schools, urge the Chicago Board of Education to oppose the Pilsen TIF expansion (Ordinance O2024-0010974), proposed by Alderman Sigcho-Lopez and Mayor Johnson.</p> <p>TIF districts divert property tax revenue from public schools, worsening funding shortages. While some TIF funds support school infrastructure, they cannot directly pay for essential staffing or pensions. The Chicago Teachers Union has called for ending all TIFs:</p> <p>"De-TIFing Chicago by expiring all TIFs and sweeping fund balances would generate well over \$1 billion in surplus immediately, stabilizing schools instead of forcing cuts." — Pavlyn Jankov, CTU Research Director</p> <p>The proposed expansion would cover 80–85% of the 25th Ward, diverting approximately \$55 million annually from CPS. Other neighborhoods would be forced to cover the shortfall.</p> <p>CPS is already struggling with revenue generation, especially amid an ongoing pension crisis. Instead of losing public funds to more TIF districts, CPS needs additional revenue to support its schools and retirees.</p> <p>Our coalition has gathered over 1,700 signatures from Pilsen residents and sent more than 2,600 emails opposing this expansion. We urge the Board of Education to stand for public schools by rejecting the Pilsen TIF expansion. Chicago's tax dollars should fund education, not be funneled into private TIF accounts.</p> <p>Sign this petition to demand full funding for our schools and stop the Pilsen TIF expansion: bit.ly/nopilsentif</p> <p>Signed,</p> <p>Residents Against TIF Expansion</p> |
| 7 | Dubensky versus Chicago Public Schools. United States District Court. Northern District of Illinois. Chicago. Case #24-cv-12543. Swing Sub. 2-month assignment. Licensed paraprofessional endorsement license# 2663107. I need the Short Term Approval ISBE Form signed (ISBE 83-88). I would get to operate the smart TVs and bring the kids to the local public library. E-mail MrDubensky@uchicago.edu or VM 312-519-4291. |
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Signed,
Xavier Alvarez

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Residents Against TIF Expansion

10 As a pilsen neighborhood resident and Chicago Public School employee I ask to get rid of the Pilsen TIF expansion. I am sick of it and the harm and collateral damage it has caused. NO MORE TIF!

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Leonardo Quintero,

Residents Against TIF Expansion

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14 Hello Board Members and CEO Martinez,

My name is Walter Brzeski and I need all of your help. This is the second time I've submitted this letter to the Board without a response and the other letter wasn't posted on Board website and under the Written Comments of the 02/27/25 meeting.

The CPS FOIA Dept is refusing to respond to (7) of my FOIA Requests below dating back to 09/12/23 with the first (4) FOIAs requesting the same information and documents.

When can I expect the responsive documents on all of them? The Requests range from not being responded to with the desired documents from 70-356 business days. Yes 356.

1. N014194-091223 - All construction plans, CPS FY2023 and FY2024 Budget details, capital budget spending documents, and board approvals for ADA work to be done at Steinmetz HS for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school year. This work was promised/agreed to by CPS in complaint #2019-DRC-6390 registered with the Illinois Attorney General's Civil Rights Bureau. Also, include any and all documents submitted by Chicago Public Schools in this complaint to the Illinois Attorney General's Civil Rights Bureau.

Date CPS was to respond with documents: 10/26/23

Business days since FOIA Request was filed: 356 (as of 02/25/24)

2. N014563-120423 - CPS' responses to the following FOIA Requests: N014253-092523, N014194-091223, N014245-092423, & N013919-071123

Business days since FOIA Request was filed: 302 (as of 02/25/24)

3. N015230-050324 - The CPS response to Chicago Public Schools FOIA Request N014194-091223?

Date CPS was to respond with documents: 10/01/24

Business days since FOIA Request was filed: 198 (as of 02/25/24)

4. N015374-060624 - CPS response to CPS FOIA Request N014194-091223- All construction plans, CPS FY2023 and FY2024 Budget details, capital budget spending documents, and board approvals for ADA work to be done at Steinmetz HS for the 2023-

24 and 2024-25 school year. This work was promised/agreed to by CPS in complaint #2019-DRC-6390 registered with the Illinois Attorney General's Civil Rights Bureau. Also, include any and all documents submitted by Chicago Public Schools in this complaint to the Illinois Attorney General's Civil Rights Bureau - CPS was to have to responded to this FOIA Request on 10/26/2023 and didn't. - It's been 150 business days and 223 calendar days without a response without the requested documents from CPS. Date CPS was to respond with documents: 10/15/24
Business days since FOIA Request was filed: 175 (as of 02/25/24)

5. N015415-061424 - Daily Time Record for Day-to-Day Substitute Teachers sign in sheets for Steinmetz College Prep for the 2023-24 school year. The sheets will include all of the Steinmetz employees absent for each school day, substitute teacher working for them, and time of sign and out for substitute teachers. An example of the sheets will be provided after I receive an automated reply acknowledging CPS' acceptance of this FOIA request.
Date CPS was to respond with documents: 10/09/24 (73 business days have elapsed)
Business days since FOIA Request was filed: 169 (as of 02/25/24)

6. N015701-062124 - (1) Attachment A from Carolyn Eggert (Network 15 Operations Manager) in File #9142 Date 01/20/22 re: Simone Griffin and all other attachments in File 39142, (2) 2 screenshots: a. ICT Actions Aspen and b. SCC Action Aspen with incident date, incident code, description of incident, action taken, and date action taken, (3) emails between Michael Boraz (mjboraz@cps.edu) and Simone Griffin (sggriffin@cps.edu) between 12/01/21 to 01/30/22 with KEYWORDS: Investigation, Resignation, Resign, Removal, Suspension, Failure to Report along with emails from Boraz to Griffin on 01/28/20 with KEYWORDS: Importance or Proper Recording and Document Procedures.
Date FOIA Request was narrowed: 07/23/24
Business days since FOIA Request was filed: 165, since narrowed 143 (as of 02/25/24)

7. N016314-101424 - (1) All investigative files regarding Zulma Rivera, Marcie Buckmaster, Ashok Emmanel, an

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20 Please return the monthly incentives for the guest teachers!

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ATTACHMENTS

Chicago Tribune

Resources for schools

As a parent of a Chicago Public Schools student, I was troubled by the recent Tribune article detailing the debate over CPS' budget and the \$175 million pension payment the city is pressuring the district to make (["School board members push for outside look at budget,"](#) March 14). Like so many CPS families, I worry about what this means for the future of our schools.

I have a child who performs significantly above grade level. I've been encouraged — by teachers and even my own family — to consider transferring them to a gifted school. But I don't want to do that. My family has deep roots in our community, and I believe that neighborhood schools should have the resources to support all students, whether they need extra help or more advanced learning opportunities.

Right now, CPS doesn't have the funding to truly provide for students at all academic levels. They could be offering more educational field trips and inviting guest speakers to enrich students' learning. Instead, our schools are scraping by with the bare minimum. CPS is already underfunded by \$1.2 billion. Paying an additional \$175 million to reimburse the city — money that should be going into classrooms — will make things only worse.

If the Chicago Board of Education agrees to this payment, it will face two choices: Cut school budgets this year or take on more debt. Either way, our students lose. Cuts will mean fewer resources in classrooms, while more debt will drain future school funding through interest payments — siphoning money away from students for years to come.

CPS should not have to choose between keeping its schools afloat today and keeping them solvent in the future. Instead of forcing the district to cover a pension payment it does not owe, the city should focus on securing sustainable revenue for its obligations — so CPS can focus on educating students.

The Board of Education must stand up for our schools and vote against this payment. Chicago's children deserve fully resourced classrooms, not another budget crisis.

— *Carrie Glaspie, member, Local School Council, John Hay Community Academy, Chicago*

Dr. Angel Alvarez, CPS Board Written Public Comments 3/20/2025

Dear CPS Board:

The CPS finances are in a terrible position because of decades of mismanagement. We are here because past boards failed to ask two basic questions they should be forced to answer:

How is this in the best interest of our students?

How do we avoid these problems from happening again?

For context, in 2012 when we faced millions in deficits and \$3.9 billion in deferred maintenance and needed repairs. CPS bureaucrats insisted they needed to close 50 schools that served primarily low-income students of color because that was the only way to achieve fiscal solvency and ensure our operations were sustainable. They closed those schools, and yet now we are facing over half a billion dollars in annual deficits and \$14.4 billion in needed maintenance and repairs. Past boards kept ignoring underlying problems because they failed to ask the important questions. I implore you to ask those difficult questions. One simple question to ask:

What are the financial projects for each school?

How does this happen? Because CPS is not providing an accurate account of projected expenses. If you go through the CPS's annual budget and go through the more than 500,000 line items and add up what each school gets, you will see that the budget for each school does not match what is reported to ISBE. Ask why this is and why schools do not have multi-year estimates of what they will receive. Ask why each year CPS continuously goes over budget.

Let's address other problems. Not only is CPS not providing accurate expenses, they hope that by giving you incorrect information, you will keep making the same mistakes as past boards. We should discuss disparities in funding. We should ask what the return on investment was. Progress for Latino students lags other students in the State and English language learners fail to make significant gains after the fourth grade.

I assure you that you will get to know me. I will send you reports and requests to meet with each of you. I hope you are willing to work with me for our students. Please do better than past boards, ask the hard questions, and do right by our students.

Thank you so much for your service.

Dr. Angel Alvarez

Chicago Public Schools Board Meeting Comments

March 20, 2025

Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS) commends the Illinois Class of 2024 and CPS for remarkable strides in expanding access to Early College pathways, particularly for underserved students. The collective efforts in CPS have been instrumental in Illinois ranking among the top five states in multiple AP success metrics, including:

- Third in the nation for 10-year increase in the percentage of graduates scoring a 3 or higher on an AP exam during high school.
- Fourth in the nation for the percentage of Black/African American graduates taking an AP exam during high school.
- Fifth in the nation for the percentage of Hispanic/Latino graduates taking an AP exam during high school.

Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS) is a nonprofit that has partnered with Chicago Public Schools since 2017. We help close the opportunity gap by increasing access and enrollment in Early College coursework like Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment, AP, and IB with tools, data, insights, and coaching to shift mindsets about paths to postsecondary success.

All of our partner schools have made a significant impact on access and opportunity. We would like to recognize stand out leadership in a few EOS partner schools at each CPS high school network.

- Network 14: Taft, Von Steuben, Kelvyn Park, Steinmetz College
- Network 15: North-Grand, Ogden
- Network 16: Air Force Academy, Hubbard
- Network 17: Washington, Kenwood
- Options: Peace & Education Coalition

Congratulations to the staff, administrators, and EOS Partnership Directors who lead this work. EOS is proud to partner with CPS in pursuit of opportunities for all students.

Crystal Williams
Chicago Board of Education
Thursday, March 20th

Comments in Support of the Youth Connection Charter School

My name is Crystal Williams, a proud 1995 graduate of CCA Academy. My parents and I chose CCA for its small, family-oriented environment, which mirrored my previous experience in a parochial school. At CCA, I received personalized support and engaged in enriching educational and cultural activities. This nurturing setting helped me, find my identity and sense of belonging.

With the encouragement of CCA's dedicated staff and teachers, I pursued my dreams, earning a Bachelor's in Social Work from Mississippi Valley State University. After a year as a case manager at CCA, I realized I needed more and returned to school, earning my Master's in Social Work at UIC's Jane Addams College of Social Work. Returning to CCA in 2003, I've also obtained a Master's in Educational Leadership from Northeastern. I currently serve the Director of Student Services and Clinical Social Worker.

Our Motto is, At CCA, everyone's job is to learn. Both students and staff are given opportunities to grow. Schools like CCA and other YCCS campuses are vital for students who thrive in a small, supportive environment. These schools nurture our emerging leaders by accommodating all students, no matter the barriers they face.

Let's continue to support our youth by providing these essential services. CCA's philosophy is to "Punch holes in the darkness and change lives, one student, one family at a time." Along with YCCS, we are committed to spreading love and light to our future leaders and their families!

I am Dr. Myra Sampson, founder, CEO, and Principal of CCA Academy. CCA Academy started in 1978 and is celebrating 46 years of educating youth.

Since 1997, it has been one of the 17 campuses of Youth Connection Charter School (YCCS). YCCS and CCA were Level-One CPS schools, when CPS rated schools.

YCCS has specialized in serving older students with lower skills and multiple barriers to completing school. Providing a theme orientated competency based curriculum, YCCS and its campuses have become innovators at reengaging, educating, and building trusting relationships with students.

CCA Academy's theme is urban agriculture/sustainability. We have transformed ten vacant lots into gardens. These include two urban gardens; a 1000-gallon aquaponics system; a pollinator bioswale with chickens and beehives; and a permaculture food forest. CCA has partnered with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Chicago Architecture Biennial, Argonne National Labs, and many community agencies/gardeners. Students learn agricultural and environmental skills to sustain themselves and the community.

YCCS campuses serve the most vulnerable youth in the city by focusing on flexibility and accessibility to meet student needs. YCCS has graduated 27,000 students. Graduates become tax payers instead of statistics. The students need us, the city needs us. Renew Youth Connection Charter School without restrictions.

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