

November 1, 2024 Board Meeting Written Comments
Received between Wednesday, October 30th and Monday, November 4th
Submitted via Written Comments Form

1	As a proud CPS parent, I demand the removal of Reverend Mitchell Ikenna Johnson as President of the Chicago Board of Education. His legacy of inappropriate comments makes all CPS students and families less safe. This appointment is dangerous and distracts an entire city from the great work by teachers and administrators. The conspiracy theories, sexism, and antisemitism the Reverend has promoted sets a horrific example for all of CPS. Our city deserves better.
2	My written comments are simple. The board chair needs to resign. Someone who has spewed such ignorance, hate, and disregard for fellow human beings should not be in ANY role that requires public service, let alone a role that will help to shape our children across the city. His antisemitic views are a stain on the city of Chicago and to those of us who truly take pride in public service. The board chair says that he has "received feedback" from Jewish people in his life. Did he seek that feedback, or did it come to him unsolicited? Now that the story is public, will he continue to "receive feedback?" Here's some feedback- resign, and leave the public service to those who love all Chicagoans.
3	I am deeply concerned about the appointment of Rev. Mitchell Ikenna Johnson. As a grandchild of Holocaust Survivors, I have been aware of Jew hatred and it's dangers all of my life. I understand how embedded it is in all societies and how it is a virus that mutates throughout generations. I have been following the increase in antisemitism for a few years and have watched it grow exponentially since October 7th. If one does not truly understand antisemitism and how it works, it becomes easy to dismiss, rationalize, or even excuse. I want to make it very clear that allowing this man to be the president of our school board is very dangerous. This is not a single person saying a few offensive things, this is a symptom of a greater issue, one of which very few people understand. I implore those who are supposed to be educated and support our children to learn about antisemitism, the history, how it morphs, how it hides, and how it is excused so one day you do not look back and wonder how once again all the Jewish people who once lived among you are gone. I will take this opportunity to recommend a few books for members of the school board to consider reading if they are on the fence about the decision to force this man to resign. "Uncomfortable Conversations with a Jew" by Noa Tishby and Emmmanuel Acho, "Jews Don't Count" by David Baddiel, "People Love Dead Jews" by Dara Horn, and On Settler Colonialism by Adam Kirsch. In fact, these books should be required reading for anyone who purports to care about diversity, inclusion, respect, and peace. Thank you for your time and I hope you make the right decision.
4	Chicago public schools and their students deserve a leader free from hate and slander . I want to call on Rev. Johnson to step down from his position and for our mayor to take significantly more care in decisions that impact the youth of our city. Jewish families and families of all religions and race who send their kids to Chicago Public Schools deserve representatives who values them and does not express hate towards the Jewish community. There is no room for anti semitism in our schools what Johnson has shown time and time again is not anti Zionism, it's pure anti semitism. Do better, Chicago. My kids deserve a safe space to learn.
5	Jewish parents cannot feel comfortable sending their children to Chicago Public Schools when the newly appointed Board President has repeatedly made antisemitic public statements, including stating that Jews have "adopted Nazi ideology," suggesting that Jews have "joined the Alt Right Community," stating that all Israelis (which include more than 6 million Jews) are "oppressors" and that Hamas has "an absolute right to attack

[them] by any means necessary!!!," and stating that he is no longer friends with his Jewish friends (I'm sure the feeling is mutual buddy).

I suspect that the Board President will claim he is not antisemitic because his dehumanizing statements were only directed at Zionist Jews. Not the "good" Jews. That claim falls apart upon only a minimal amount of critical thinking. First, non-Jews like the Board President should not be dictating what is and is not antisemitic. Just as I'm sure the Board President would agree that white people should not dictate what is and is not racist towards black people. Nor should any person who is not a member of an ethnicity dictate to members of that ethnicity what is and is not offensive to them. The vast majority of Jews know that the Board President's statements are antisemitic and extraordinarily offensive and the Board should listen to what Jews are saying.

Second, polls show that between 85% to more than 97% of Jews support Zionism (which is not a slur but simply the belief that Jews have a right to self-determination in their ancestral homeland, which is Israel (nothing else)). Thus, claiming that it is not antisemitic to dehumanize Zionists because you have no problem with Jews is ridiculous. It suggests that Jews are okay as long as they denounce a critical part of their culture, history, religion, and identity--exactly what antisemites have demanded throughout history, from the Crusades to Nazi Germany to Soviet Russia, before those antisemites ultimately began murdering and ethnically cleansing Jews regardless of the extent to which the Jews denounced their identity. Thus, history shows that the Board President's views are dangerous and those that hold them should have no place in public office or education.

Third, even if you believe there are certain Zionists or Jews who are evil, bad, wrong, etc., a person involved in education should know that subscribing the views of on person or even some to an entire group of people is dehumanizing, wrong, dangerous, and has no place in the Chicago education system. Yet, that is exactly what the Board President has repeatedly done in his abhorrent public statements. I could go on, but there is a 4000 character limit to the comments. The point is that there is no excuse for the Board President's statements.

An apology by the Board President would be appreciated, but it will not suffice. He publicly stated that Hamas's mass rape, torture, burning, kidnapping, and murder (these terms do not effectively describe the extreme cruelty that Hamas inflicted) of Jews was justified. You cannot walk that back. He must resign immediately. Otherwise, I suspect the Jewish community in this City with children will be moving elsewhere, leaving the City that they love. Resign.

6	I would like to invite the board and executive staff to attend the November 22nd Jason Moran and the Harlem Hell Fighters Concert at Symphony Hall. Jason Moran is a MacCarther Fellow, and Jazz director at the Kennedy Center. He has invited the Kenwood Academy Marching Band to join him on stage for this concert. It is a rare and unique opportunity for the school and district to perform in a world class venue with a global leader in the arts.
7	Taft, Kenwood, Solario, Curie, Benito Juarez- If you look at the trajectory over the last decade they are now some of the strongest schools we have. We have one of 20,000 8th graders in the district. We're at the Kenwood AC and the high school is our first choice for high school. That's the truth for many parents at Kenwood and Taft. Going to an AC did put the city's top selective enrollment schools within our grasp, but those schools are not Kenwood. I wish I had more time to share what's going right in CPS, but

I don't. And I'm here before you today with a personal problem that I think you can help me solve.

We also have a 5th grader on the Autism Spectrum- And something "interesting" happened in his 504 meeting earlier this month. We met with the team, teacher, social worker and his case manager. We went through the meeting and removed some age specific elements, relevant to younger grades, but very few other changes were made. Our son did have at least two meltdowns at school in September, and several similar ones at home, this is consistent with previous years.

However the 504 that got sent to me later that afternoon was extremely different than last years.

Transportation had been removed. This move was made with no mention of it in the meeting. I reached out to the case manager thinking it was just a clerical error and that portion of the 504 didn't auto populate or something, but that was not the case. As a matter of fact, it seems like the decision was made prior to our 504 meeting, not mentioned in our meeting, and only after I brought it up did it go for review before other case managers. I'm not sure it ever went before his teacher or school staff that has been working with him for years.

When I reached out to the FRCD they said they've been fielding other calls like ours where it seems like CPS is making the decision to cut transportation for students with disabilities prior to the iep/504 meeting with no input from parents or professionals.

8 Dear New Board Members of CPS

The previous board members all resigned, this was my 2 min speech to them telling them to heal this journey, i was being targeted on many level but it started when i spoke about Jesus Christ, i am a Coptic. <http://www.coptic.net/EncyclopediaCoptica/>

Previous board members voted to wait till they hear from OCR to seek any mediation but this approach is wrong as with time,. the truth was discovered and many people resigned starting with inspector William Fletcher of oig cps and Camie Pratt former title ix coordinator, their crimes where many. They both resigned, left CPS and left the state of Illinois after my IARDC complaints, the timeline showed when they resigned but for the past years since 2022 when they did evil, they never resigned until God revealed the truth.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aganeAsCCKc&t=4754s>

While other people who did evil are still at CPS like:

Jennifer Reger (her crimes were many, for someone to hate me that much, she was evil)
Kelly Tarrant
Udeme Itiat
Libby Massey
Adam Lechnir

But rather then see the sins of others and what they did in this journey because of this very same case that is now pending before the supreme court, the best way is healing.

Bochra v. U.S. Department of Education (1:21-cv-03887)

<https://www.supremecourt.gov/search.aspx?filename=/docket/docketfiles/html/public/24-5703.html>

Under OCR manual, a recipient can seek mediation at any time and seek a resolution agreement toward a complaint. See OCR Manual

<https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/ocrcpm.pdf>

My OCR Complaint is 05-24-1198 and is being handled by Ms. Melissa Howard.

CPS can resolve any OCR complaint by reaching out through the mediation process

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I often say the best way to heal injustice is through healing. Mayor Johnson read many of my emails, and he chose new board members to bring joy to pain not to delay healing because "justice delayed is justice denied"

So please commit to mediation with OCR using your new powers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0feZQkHbCkM&t=2111s>

God bless!

9	As a Jewish parent of a Jewish child in the CPS system, I am deeply angry and disgusted with the antisemitic comments made by Rev. Mitchell Ikenna Johnson on his Facebook page. Repeatedly calling on your "Jewish friends" to answer for the actions of a for foreign government and defending/justifying the targeted murder of Jewish civilians as resistance by "any means necessary" is blatant antisemitism. Someone who holds these hateful views and publicly expresses them should NOT hold a leadership position in one of the largest and most diverse public school systems in the country. Our mayor should have known better by doing actual vetting before appointing Rev. Johnson. In light of these statements, I will not be satisfied unless Rev. Johnson resigns or the mayor acts immediately to remove Rev. Johnson from the school board.
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