



Board of Education | City of Chicago

**July 20, 2026 #1 Budget Hearing Written Comments Received between,
Thursday July 16th and Tuesday, July 21, 2026 Submitted via Written Comments
Form**

July 20, 2026

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**July 20, 2026 #1 Budget Hearing Written Comments Received between,
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1	Dear President and Members of the Chicago Board of Education, I am writing to formally submit my public comment regarding the proposed FY2027 budget and to voice my strongest opposition to the school-level PSRP (Paraprofessional and School-Related Personnel) displacements. I am a 32-year veteran Teaching Assistant currently working at Bridge Elementary School. Yesterday, I received a phone call from my principal, notifying me that my position is being eliminated due to the newly proposed school-level budget allocations. To receive this news after dedicating over three consecutive decades of my life to the children of Chicago is beyond devastating and heartbreaking. A school community is not just a collection of numbers on a spreadsheet; it is built on a foundation of trust, stability, and knowledge. For 32 years, I have been that stable foundation for countless families. As a bilingual educator fluent in both English and Polish, my role extends far beyond standard classroom assistance. I serve as a critical linguistic and cultural bridge for immigrant families who are trying to navigate the school system. While I understand the district faces a \$732 million deficit, balancing the budget on the backs of dedicated, 32-year veteran paraprofessionals is a policy failure. I urge the Board of Education to reject these specific school-site staffing cuts, especially for those that have dedicated and spent so many years with CPS. Thank you for your time, your service and dedication. With gratitude, Teaching Assistant
2	I just finished my 3rd year in CPS, 6th year overall as a school counselor when I received word I was cut. My school has had a growing incoming freshmen population each year, enrollment is not declining. Along with increasing population has come a major increase in social emotional needs. I work in a high needs school. My student population has also suffered most from the outcomes of immigration enforcement in our city, losing their parents, grandparents, etc. They have now been stripped of a counselor and support that they need more than ever. Other positions are being added elsewhere but taking their counselor was what was advised to be cut. My students need me. They need that support in the building. This will have a major affect on them and the other counselors who will now be overworked and burnt out trying to do something they love. On a more personal note, I am 4.5 months pregnant with my first child. I am now faced with the reality I may not be able to provide for my family and that people won't want to hire someone who will



	need to go on leave. I'm due in December. If I don't find a full time position now, I won't be able to try to find one until next school year knowing I will be out the first few months of 2027. This will be detrimental to my family. The last summer I have before the baby comes has been taken from me and my partner, riddled with stress and anxiety instead of joy and excitement. After a whole year of expensive fertility treatments now to add on to the bills with my income being taken away. I love my job. I love my school. I love my students. I love my coworkers, and I love Chicago. Please put our kids first and give them the supports they need in school. Please consider the repercussions of these decisions.
3	Why are all CPS employees being sent back to the physical offices vs their hybrid WFH schedules? Some departments don't even have enough physical offices for the staff to go to, hence the WFH schedules. How much CPS money are we letting King waste on accommodating this illusion that this will improve "collaboration"? Why are we looking for ways to decrease morale AND spend more money?
4	To the Members of the Chicago Board of Education, As a concerned community member, I want to address the proposed Chicago Public Schools budget. While I recognize the severe fiscal pressures and structural deficit facing the district, budget cuts must not come at the expense of our children's mental health, safety, and emotional well-being. I am deeply troubled by the apparent reductions in staffing and funding impacting the Office of Social and Emotional Learning (OSEL) and associated support roles across the district. Why OSEL and Behavioral Health Supports Must Be Preserved: - Direct Impact on Safety and Learning: Traumatic experiences, behavioral challenges, and mental health needs do not pause during budget crises. OSEL provides vital frameworks for multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), restorative practices, mental health partners in schools, and crisis de-escalation that keep classrooms safe and functioning. -Teacher Retention and Workload: When central and citywide behavioral supports are scaled back, the burden shifts onto classroom teachers who are already stretched thin. Removing SEL infrastructure accelerates educator burnout and attrition. -Equity and Early Intervention: Vulnerable students relying on school-based behavioral health and SEL programming will be hit hardest by these reductions. Preventive SEL support saves the district significant long-term costs associated with crises, suspensions, and special education referrals.



	CPS cannot fulfill its commitment to student achievement while scaling back the very programs that make learning possible. I strongly urge the Board to protect OSEL funding, maintain citywide mental health positions, and seek sustainable revenue solutions that safeguard student well-being.
5	I recommend that the Board consider implementing reasonable salary caps for executive leadership and conducting a comprehensive review of highly compensated administrative positions as part of its strategy to address the current budget deficit. At a time when the District is facing significant financial challenges, it should evaluate whether executive and senior admin compensation is aligned with current fiscal realities and taxpayer expectations. Reducing or limiting compensation at the highest levels would demonstrate shared accountability and could help preserve funding for classrooms, teachers, student services, and other direct educational priorities. Fiscal responsibility should begin at the top, with leadership sharing in the sacrifices required to restore the District's long term financial stability.



****ATTACHMENTS****



ЕЛЛОЧКА ТЮТЮНИК

1937

1986

ТВОИ ЧУДЕСНЫЕ ЧЕРТЫ
ОСТАНУТСЯ ПРИ НАШЕЙ ЖИЗНИ
В СЕРДЦАХ КТО ЗНАЛ ТЕБЯ ЛЮБИ
КТО ЖИЗНЬ ТЕБЕ ВСЮ ПОСВЯТИЛ



#5

THE DEAD FEEL NO PAIN--
A BELARUSIAN NOVEL
OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR BY VASIL' BYKAU





July 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday: 1 - 7pm Saturday & Sunday: 2 - 6pm			1 2-3pm Career Workshop 3-4 pm BINGO 5-6pm Mindfulness 4-7pm Games Group	2 2-3pm Grief and Loss 5-6pm Gratitude Journaling	3 2-3pm Healthy Boundaries 3-4pm Flipping the Script 4-5pm Hilarious Healing	4 12:30-2pm Connection 4th of July Cookout
5 2-3pm Coloring/Painting 3-4pm CHOGA	6 2-3pm Goals Group 3-3:30pm Meditation 4-5pm Creative Writing Workshop	7 2-3pm Wellness Topic Group 4-5pm Mind-Body Group 5-6pm COMMIT	8 2-3pm Career Workshop 3-4 pm BINGO 5-6pm Mindfulness 4-7pm Games Group	9 2-3pm Relationship Group 5-6pm Gratitude Journaling	10 2-3pm Coping with Stress 3-4pm Flipping the Script 4-5pm Hilarious Healing	11 12:30-2pm Connection 2-3pm Military Support Group 3:30-5:30pm Popcorn and a Movie
12 2-5pm Video Game Extravaganza	13 2-3pm Goals Group 3-3:30pm Meditation 4-5pm Creative Writing Workshop	14 2-3pm Wellness Topic Group 4-5pm Mind-Body Group	15 2-3pm Career Workshop 3-4 pm BINGO 5-6pm Mindfulness 4-7pm Games Group	16 2-3pm Grief and Loss 5-6pm Gratitude Journaling	17 2-3pm Healthy Boundaries 3-4pm Flipping the Script 4-5pm Hilarious Healing	18 12:30-2pm Connection 2-3pm Military Support Group 3:30-5:30pm Popcorn and a Movie
19 2-3pm Coloring/Painting 3-4pm CHOGA 4-5pm Drum Circle	20 2-3pm Goals Group 3-3:30pm Meditation 4-5pm Creative Writing Workshop	21 2-3pm Wellness Topic Group 4-5pm Mind-Body Group	22 2-3pm Career Workshop 3-4 pm BINGO 5-6pm Mindfulness 4-7pm Games Group	23 2-3pm Relationship Group 5-6pm Gratitude Journaling	24 2-3pm Coping with Stress 3-4pm Flipping the Script 4-5pm Hilarious Healing	25 12:30-2pm Connection 2-3pm Military Support Group 3:30-5:30pm Popcorn and a Movie
26 2-4pm Birthday Celebration	27 2-3pm Goals Group 3-3:30pm Meditation 4-5pm Creative Writing Workshop	28 2-3pm Wellness Topic Group 3-5pm Creative Workshop 5-6pm COMMIT	29 2-3pm Career Workshop 3-4 pm BINGO 4-7pm Games Group	30 2-3pm Grief and Loss 5-6pm Gratitude Journaling	31 2-3pm Healthy Boundaries 3-4pm LGBTQIA+ 4-5pm Hilarious Healing	



Metro Suburban

*Everyone is welcome to stop by anytime regardless of group schedule.
Groups are optional, and all Drop-In Center services are FREE.*

DROP-IN CENTER GROUP DESCRIPTIONS

Art Studio

Choose your own Art adventure! From collaging to painting and coloring, the choice is yours.

Bingo

Try your luck at a few rounds of BINGO. Prizes awarded to winners.

Birthday Celebration

Come together for food and cake to celebrate the month's worth of Birthdays! Cake is cut at 3pm!

Check-In Group

This group is an open discussion format. Come here to speak your truth and get support.

CHOGA

Guided Chair Yoga for beginners. ALL are welcome!

Coloring & Painting

This group is free art time where participants can create whatever they want. Supplies provided.

COMMIT

Get up and move around to this dance fitness class. All are welcome

Connection Support Group

Participants gain insight and support from hearing the challenges and successes of others

Coping with Stress

Peers provide self-care tips and coping skills to help manage stress

Creative Workshop

Come join us as we create something beautiful and FUN!

Creative Writing Workshop

Explore your creativity through writing!

Drum Circle

Come relax to the sounds of the beautiful rhythms of participants drumming.

Flipping the Script

Tools and Exercises to free oneself from stories of the past.

Games Group

This is just a fun time for video games, board games and card games!

Goals Group

Create S.M.A.R.T. Goals for the week and check-in around goals from the previous week

Grief and Loss

Participants learn of the different ways to grieve any loss

Healthy Boundaries

Discover how to, and empower yourself to, set boundaries in your life!

Hilarious Healing

Explore pathways to healing with comedy.

JULY 4th Cookout

Celebrate the Nation's 250th birthday!

LGBTQIA+

This group will provide Mental Health support and a safe place for individuals in the LGBTQIA+ community Open to both Queer individuals and allies

Meditation

Take a moment to relax to a guided meditation and a walk outside (if weather permits).

Mind-Body Group

This group uses gentle techniques such as breathing, grounding and gentle body awareness to reconnect to your body.

Mindfulness Group

Build awareness of their thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations and surroundings through guided mindfulness practice.

Popcorn and a Movie

A safe place to enjoy entertaining and non-violent movies,,, and have some popcorn!

Relationship Group

Learn about different types of relationships including: relationships with others, with self and with recovery.

The Military Support Group

Real Talk. Real Support. No Judgement

Video Games Extravaganza

Come join us for socialization and friendly competition with video games (Games must be rated "E" or "T")

Wellness Topic Group

This group will discuss various Mental Health Topics that are important to the group

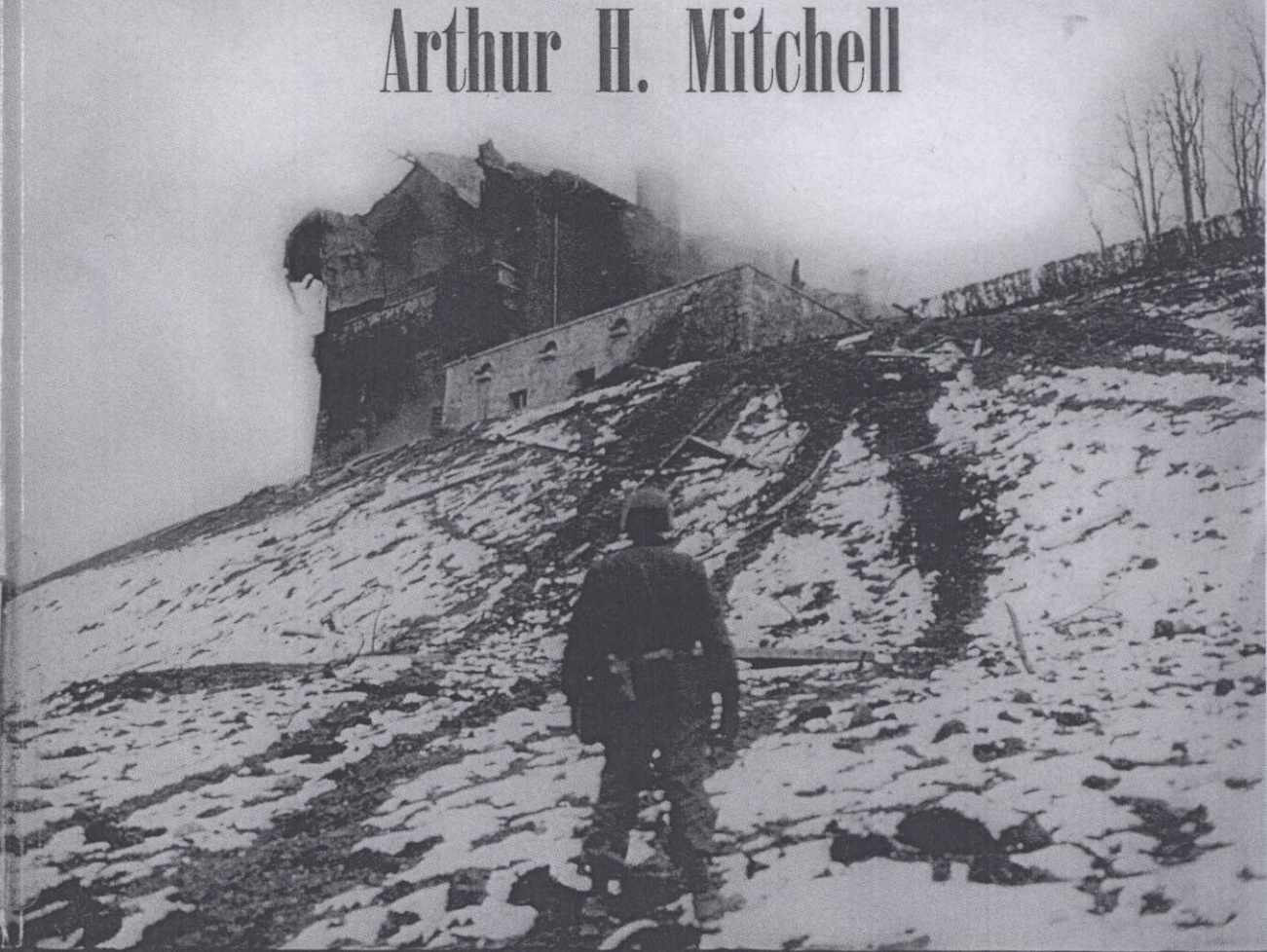
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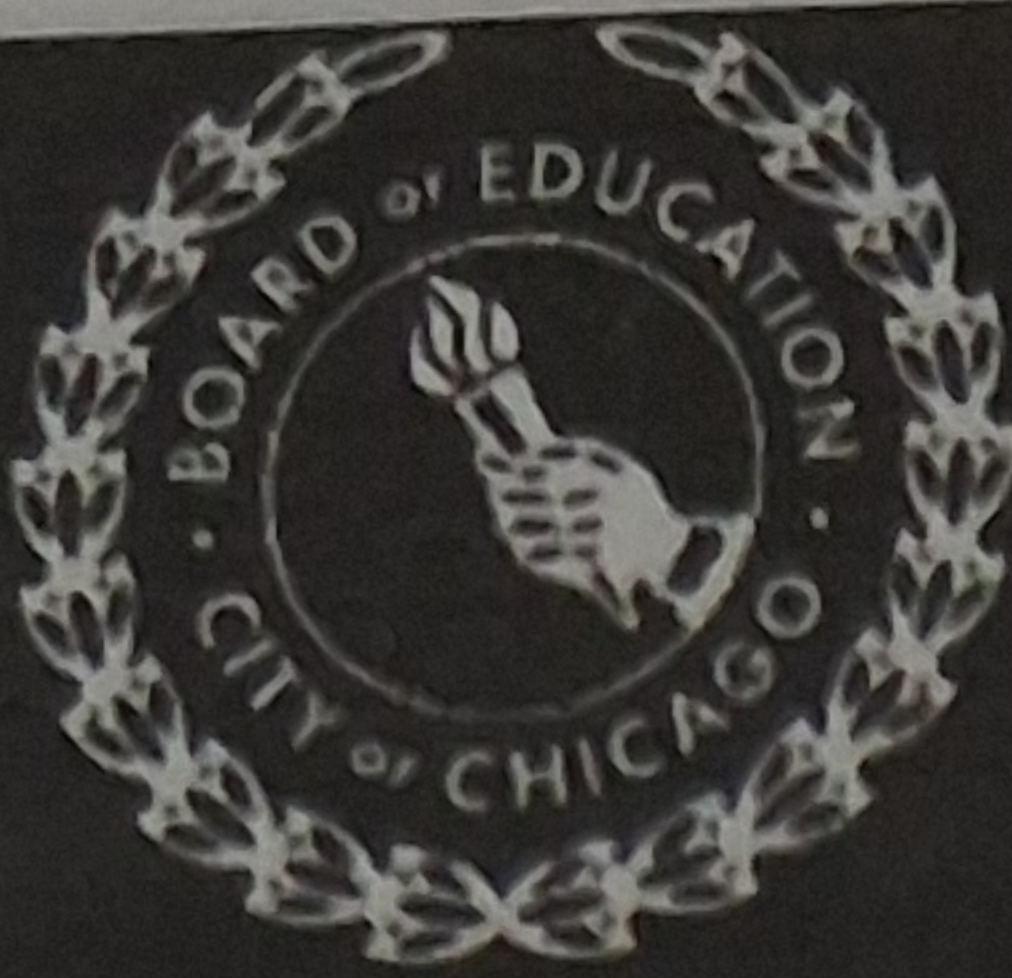
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HITLER'S MOUNTAIN

The Führer, Obersalzberg and the
American Occupation of Berchtesgaden

Arthur H. Mitchell

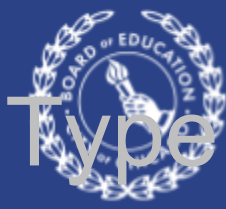




June 25, 2026, Board Meeting Written Comments

Received between, Tuesday June 23rd and Friday June 26th, Submitted via
Written Comments Form

1	I am in support of maintaining the Arabic language program at Lincoln Park High School and the teacher who is in danger of losing his visa due to participation in the program.
2	As a CPS parent and incoming Local School Council member at Ebinger Elementary, I recently met with my principal and other parents to better understand the FY27 special education staffing process, including the 70/30 rule, staffing allocations, and the review process. I appreciate CPS's commitment to increasing special education funding and moving toward a needs-based staffing model. However, I am concerned that schools continue to identify significant differences between allocated staffing and actual student service needs, often requiring additional staffing adjustments after the school year begins. If schools are repeatedly seeking staffing adjustments year after year, CPS should evaluate whether the initial allocation methodology is accurately capturing student needs. Because special education services are legally mandated, families should have confidence that schools are staffed appropriately from the first day of school, rather than relying on post-allocation corrections or the 20th-day review process. I respectfully ask the Board to provide greater transparency regarding: • How special education staffing allocations are calculated; • How schools can request review of allocations that appear inconsistent with student needs; • How many schools have required staffing adjustments or appeals in recent years; and • What steps CPS is taking to ensure students receive legally mandated services without interruption. Thank you for your commitment to Chicago's students.
3	I am a parent at Prescott Elementary. I have an incoming kindergartener who has an IEP requiring instruction in a separate setting, often called a resource room.



Type text here

Attendance and Roll Call
Agenda Review Committee Meeting
July 8, 2026

District	Board Member	Attendance	Notes
1A	Bannon	Present	
1B	Custer	Present	
2A	DeBerry	Present	
2B	Pope	Present	
3A	Rios-Sierra	Present	
3B	Rivas Jr.	Present	
4A	Zaccor	Present	
4B	Rosenfeld	Absent	
5A	Brown	Present	
5B	Blaise	Present	
6A	Thotakura	Present	Board Member joined the meeting at 11:30 AM
6B	Biggs	Present	
7A	Lozano	Present	
7B	Lopez	Present	
8A	Gutierrez	Present	Board Member joined the meeting at 11:18 AM
8B	Wallace	Present	
9A	Vice President Velez	Present	
9B	Boyle	Present	Board Member joined the meeting at 11:30 AM
10A	Smith	Present	
10B	Vacant	-	
	President Harden	Present	
	Present	19	

CPS July 2026 Budget Proposal Overview

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has proposed a **\$9.8 billion balanced budget** for the 2026–27 school year to close a **\$732 million deficit** [AOL+1](#). The plan includes a mix of spending cuts, staffing changes, and new investments in student support.

Key budget measures:

- **\$732 million in reductions** via:
 - Elimination of **162 central office positions** and **801 educational support staff** (including teacher aides) [AOL+1](#).
 - **760 teacher layoffs** and **5 furlough days** for staff during non-instructional periods (e.g., training, report card pickup) [Chicago Sun-Times](#).
 - A **midyear spending freeze** to control costs [AOL](#).
- **\$200 million in TIF surplus funds** and reliance on potential additional state or city funding [AOL](#).
- **\$143 million more in total school funding** than last year, with extra resources for students with disabilities [Chicago Public Schools+1](#).
- Avoidance of adding to CPS's existing **\$9+ billion debt**, which costs over \$900 million annually [Chicago Public Schools+1](#).

Staffing impacts:

- CPS projects **760 teacher impacts** and **801 educational support professional impacts** as schools adjust staffing [AOL](#).
- The Chicago Teachers Union disputes the numbers, calling it roughly **1,000 layoffs** and arguing vacancies will remain unfilled [AOL](#).
- Unions warn the cuts eliminate some negotiated pay raises and could disrupt learning [Chicago Sun-Times+1](#).

Rationale from CPS leadership:

- Superintendent/CEO Dr. Macqueline King said the budget is “student-centered” and necessary to prevent debt and interest payments that would harm classroom spending [Chicago Sun-Times](#).
- Declining enrollment (down 45,000 since 2019) combined with rising costs in labor, pensions, and aging facilities has strained finances [Chicago Public Schools+1](#).

Next steps:

- The proposal will undergo **public hearings** before a **July 30 vote** by the Chicago Board of Education [AOL](#).
- If approved, the midyear freeze and furloughs could be delayed if additional funding is secured [Chicago Sun-Times](#).

In short, the July 16–17 CPS budget proposal balances cost-cutting with targeted investments in special education and student support, but it has sparked significant union pushback over staffing and pay impacts.

УРОК 1

А. ДИАЛОГ (Dialogue)

В аэропорту.

На борту самолёта, совершающего рейс¹ из Атланты в Москву через Франкфурт. До посадки в аэропорту Шереметьево² осталось примерно полчаса.

ГОЛОС БОРТПРОВОДНИЦЫ ПО ДИНАМИКУ: Дамы и господа! Через минут двадцать пять мы совершим посадку в аэропорту Шереметьево города Москвы. Сейчас по московскому времени 21³ час. Температура 12 градусов по Цельсию,⁴ или 54 градуса по Фаренгейту. Не забудьте, пожалуйста, заполнить таможенные декларации, которые вам раздали раньше. Это значительно ускорит прохождение таможенного досмотра. Через несколько минут самолёт пойдёт на посадку и поэтому просим вас занять свои места и пристегнуться.⁵

ДАВИД: Мне кажется, что нам достаточно заполнить одну декларацию на двоих.⁶

ЕЛЕНА: Наверное, ты прав, но я всё же спрошу стюардессу... Простите, девушка!⁷ Мы с мужем должны заполнить отдельные декларации?

СТЮАРДЕССА: Нет, так как вы путешествуете вместе, хватит⁸ одной.

ЕЛЕНА: Спасибо.

Пройдя паспортный контроль, супруги⁹ Моран собирают свои вещи и готовятся к таможенному досмотру.

ТАМОЖЕННИК: Ваши декларации, пожалуйста.

ДАВИД: Вот, одна на двоих. Мы путешествуем вместе.

ТАМОЖЕННИК: Это ваши чемоданы?

ЕЛЕНА: Да. Вот эти два больших чемодана и две сумки.

LIVING LANGUAGE
A Random House Company

A COMPLETE TEXTBOOK
AND REFERENCE GUIDE

ULTIMATE

RUSSIAN

ADVANCED

LIVELY and authentic dialogues

COMPLETE explanations of grammar

CULTURAL highlights

BUSINESS vocabulary and etiquette

PLUS grammar summary,
verb conjugations, and glossary



July 14, 2026

Ultimate Russian Advanced

Learn Russian from native language speakers. Living languages is a self-instruction text with CDs featuring dialogues and day to day conversation between native speakers that are traveling, vacationing, going to a wedding or renting an apartment. The first lesson instructs the listener on practical ways to travel to Moscow and stay at hotels in the metropolitan area. The recordings are written in both English and Russian.

The first lesson is a dialogue for a couple traveling to Moscow.

Dialogue:

At the airport

On board a flight from Atlanta to Moscow, via Frankfurt. About a half hour from landing in Sheremetyevo Airport

Диалог
В аэропорту
На борту самолета, летящего из Атланты в
Москву через Франкфурт. Примерно полчаса до
посадки в аэропорту Шереметьево.

Lesson two

At the hotel

Lesson three

Finding an apartment

Lesson four

Picnic at the Dacha

Lesson 5

A job interview

Lesson 6

First day on the job.

Good Morning/Afternoon Board,

I am an alumna of Steinmetz College Prep, graduating with the Class of 2023. During my four years at Steinmetz, I had the opportunity to take both Ethnic Studies and the Dual Credit African American Studies course, which was offered in partnership with the City Colleges of Chicago.

Every school year, juniors and seniors at Steinmetz choose their elective classes based on what they're interested in and what they hope to learn. Ethnic Studies was one of those electives in which the class gave students a chance to have meaningful discussions, learn about different cultures and think about history and society in ways that a traditional Political Science class doesn't always get into. It wasn't just another elective that students get the freedom to pick, but a class that encouraged students to think about the world around them and better understand the communities they live in.

There is a concern that the current Principal of Steinmetz is making the decision to eliminate this course as the Sustainable Community Schools Grant was created to support culturally responsive and anti-racist educational opportunities that go beyond the traditional curriculum. As removing Ethnic Studies seems to go against that goal by taking away these expanding opportunities for Steinmetz students not only just to broaden their learning experiences but also to earn college credit through the Dual Enrollment course of the curriculum.

I want to point out that teachers at Steinmetz organized a petition showing that about 95% of the faculty supported keeping the Ethnic Studies course and other culturally responsive electives. That tells me this isn't just a few people who support keeping this class but all of these educators who work with students every single day and understand what benefits them academically and

personally as their voices deserve to be heard & taken seriously when decisions like this are being made too.

Steinmetz is a neighborhood school that serves many students from low-income families. As many of us did not have the opportunity to attend a selective enrollment high school. Every year, thousands of CPS middle school students compete for a limited number of seats at those schools for better access to educational opportunities and resources. While some are accepted, many hardworking and capable students remain at neighborhood schools like Steinmetz—not because they lacked ability, but simply because there were not enough seats available.

That is exactly why neighborhood schools should be expanding opportunities instead of reducing them. Removing even one established elective—especially one connected to the City Colleges of Chicago through a Dual Credit partnership—takes away an opportunity from students who already have fewer academic options. Students at neighborhood schools deserve the same chance to take engaging, meaningful, and culturally responsive classes as students attending selective enrollment schools. A student's educational opportunities should not be limited simply because of the school they attend.

I also respectfully ask the Board to consider the broader concerns that have been raised by many members of the Steinmetz community over the past three to four years. Students, teachers, alumni, and community members have expressed concerns about the school's leadership under the current administration and overall climate ever since the change back in 2022. When such a large majority of educators have united around an issue that directly affects the work-place environment and their students, I believe it is fair to ask whether those concerns have been fully heard and carefully reviewed.

If nearly the entire faculty—teachers who have dedicated years or even decades of their careers to Steinmetz and its students—felt it was necessary to come together and file multiple reports in the past years on an individual, I believe that alone deserves attention, rather than overlooking those concerns. The people and staff who work in the building every day know their students and want what is best for them. Listening to their voices shows a commitment to accountability, transparency, and the well-being of the entire school community.

As someone who attended Steinmetz College Prep for all four years, from 2019- including during the years of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the shift from the last administration/principal- I respectfully ask the CPS Board of Education to reconsider this proposal. I want you to please listen to the voices of those within the school walls who have consistently spoken in support of these educational opportunities and who have also expressed concerns about the climate at Steinmetz.

Again- who knows whether by the time this statement has reached you the class has been taken down or at a standstill. But for me- if even one Ethnic Studies class gets taken away, in a few years or even next year there will be other similar classes that will slowly disappear too. I was really fortunate that during my time at Steinmetz College Prep, my classmates and I had the opportunities to have taken these courses. Every student, no matter if they attend a selective enrollment school or a neighborhood school, deserves the right to have access to a meaningful, diverse, and culturally responsive education. As I believe no students should receive fewer educational opportunities simply because of the school they attend.

ABUSE OF FUNDS WITHIN THE ELL PROGRAM

I would like to address “inefficient spending” within the ELL program. Millions of dollars are dedicated to this program every year, and it has a huge problem. Kids who speak English as their primary/native language make up a significant percentage of this program. Why? Because their parents made the mistake of indicating on the **“Home Language Survey”** that another language is spoken in the home. Usually, a grandparent living in the home. However, by checking this box on the survey, parents **UNKNOWNLY** greenlight the school to pull their child out of class and give them an entrance exam into the ELL program. I am saying “entrance” not “screening” because most children cannot escape the program once they are tapped for it. It is a disingenuous process with **no oversight**, and a wasteful use of resources on children who will not benefit from it, and, in many cases, who have been placed in the program **completely against their parents’ wishes**.

When I met with our school’s ELL teacher after receiving notice about my daughter’s placement in the program, I was confused. I thought it was a mistake. The ELL teacher plainly stated that a majority of the parents she had been meeting with that week felt the same way. And indeed, this was correct. I connected with many parents whose child was put in the ELL program as native English speakers just because they have a grandparent in the household who speaks a different language. Our school has **ONLY a 15% exit rate** from the ELL program, but the majority of the students in the program speak English as their primary language. How can this be? Is it because **schools are incentivized to keep as many kids in this program for as long as possible for the funding**? How many millions of dollars can be saved if an outside partner, with no **conflict of interest**, screens kids for the ELL program instead of the very person whose position at the school relies on having kids in the program. And how many millions can be saved if parents were allowed to have a say in whether or not their child belongs in the program?

There should be transparency about what the “Home Language Survey” is actually used for, because **simply calling it a “survey” is incredibly misleading**.

Furthermore, expanding the scope of the program by claiming the **ANYONE** can be an “English Language Learner” who is technically learning English - whether as a primary or secondary language - is not only **disingenuous to the spirit and purpose of the program**, but fiscally wasteful as well.