



# Chicago Public Schools Superintendent/CEO Job Prospectus





# OVERVIEW

*The search for our District's next leader has been driven by the families, students, staff, and communities of CPS.*

In the spring of 2025, the Chicago Board of Education (Board) launched a search campaign to identify the next Superintendent/CEO of Chicago Public Schools (CPS). Through our community engagement phase, we gathered valuable insights from over 1,400 stakeholders, including CPS parents, students, teachers, principals, administrators, community residents, elected officials, and partners.

Their collective voices—shared through our stakeholder interviews and focus groups, community gatherings, and a citywide community survey—were essential in shaping this prospectus, which reflects the values, priorities, and responsibilities Chicagoans envision in the District's next leader.

We understand our search is about more than hiring a new Superintendent/CEO—it's about building a stronger, more inclusive future for CPS. And that only works if we're listening. The District's community voices are reflected in this document. The Board, in partnership with Alma Advisory Group, will use it as a guide to recruit and evaluate candidates.

On behalf of the Board, thank you to our stakeholders for being active participants in this important phase of our search process. We are truly moved by your honesty, ideas, and candid engagement. This is a shared commitment to the future of our District.

While we recognize the role may be complex and demanding, we know the right leader will embrace this opportunity, navigate the complexity, and ensure all decisions reflect the voices and lived experiences of the students and families we serve.

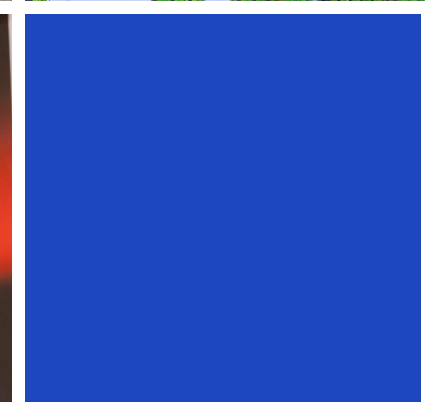
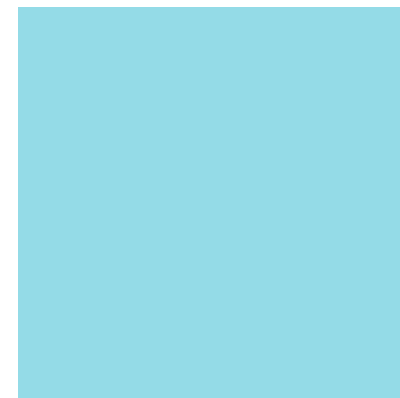
As we look forward to meeting prospective candidates, we remain committed to keeping our stakeholders informed and ensuring their feedback continues to shape our decision-making—because community voice truly matters.

In Service,

**Sean B. Harden**  
*CPS Board President*

**Jessica Biggs**  
*Board Member,  
Search Transition Team Chair*

\* Stay up to date on our search process at  
[www.cpsboe.org/supt-ceo-search](http://www.cpsboe.org/supt-ceo-search)





# ROLE

*The Superintendent/CEO is charged with carrying out the mission, vision, and strategic priorities of Chicago Public Schools in partnership with the Board of Education.*

## Key Responsibilities

- Ensure that every student experiences high-quality, joyful, and culturally-responsive learning
- Protect the District's financial stability and sustainability
- Develop, support, and retain a strong leadership team to deliver on CPS' vision and mission
- Partner with our communities to guide and accelerate the work of the District
- Support a diverse system of excellent schools in every Chicago neighborhood
- Champion our schools by communicating transparently and changing the narrative about our schools

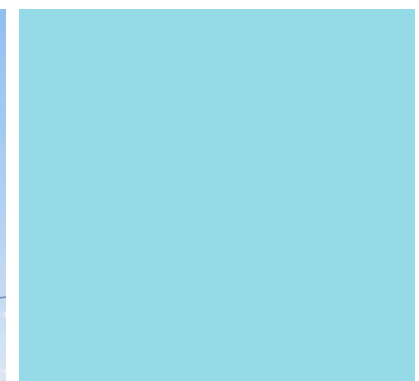
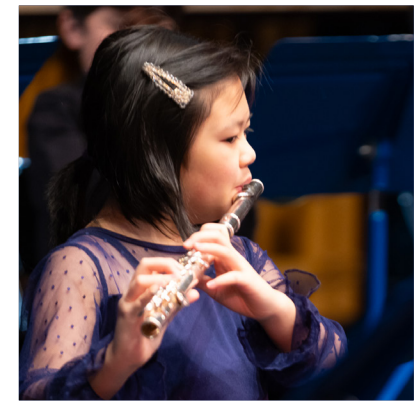
## Core Competencies

- Strong and Clear Communication
- Political Acumen
- Community-Centered Leadership
- Equity-Driven Leadership
- Innovation and Systems Perspective
- Capacity Building and Team Champion

**JOB POSTING LINK**

## Preferred Background and Experience

- Significant experience in the field of public education; experience in a direct student-facing role strongly preferred
- Proven success improving student outcomes
- Track record of addressing equity across a system of schools
- Complex and large-scale financial management experience
- Skilled at building meaningful partnerships
- Experience collaborating with labor unions and collective bargaining units
- Must hold a valid Illinois Professional Educator License with a Superintendent endorsement—or an equivalent credential from another state





# COMMUNITY Voice

**The CPS community seeks a leader who can inspire a shared vision for CPS,** protect and manage the District's finances ethically and transparently, realize the District's 5-Year strategic plan, and ensure equitable, robust, and improved resources for all CPS students.

## What we love about CPS:

- Instruction and student achievement are improving.
- Teachers, principals, and staff are deeply committed to their students.
- Student voice and leadership are encouraged and amplified.
- CPS strongly supports equity and inclusion.
- Schools have autonomy with accessible, supportive leadership.

## What we want our new Superintendent/CEO to focus on:

- Expanding post-secondary offerings
- Stabilizing finances
- Addressing enrollment decline
- Healing long-standing and historic harm across multiple communities
- Bringing new ideas and innovation to attract families back to our schools
- Addressing mental health and well-being





# COMMUNITY Engagement

To ensure that the search process is both transparent and guided by the input of CPS communities, the Board, in partnership with Alma Advisory Group, launched its community engagement campaign to maximize opportunities for public participation. Over the course of 8 weeks, members of the Board, CPS staff, community partners, and leaders came together to engage with parents, students, staff, and supporters to gather feedback from communities across the city of Chicago.

## Key facts about community engagement efforts

**Over 1,400** individuals participated **across 70+** focus groups, 1-on-1s, student panels, community gatherings, and board member-hosted meetings.

**Over 3,500** responses to CPS' community survey

**11 Community Gatherings**, covering every Elected School Board District

Partner Engagement: **Over 60** community partners conducted outreach, hosted focus groups, and/or attended meetings.





# STUDENT Voice

## What did students ask for specifically?

Students want the next Superintendent/CEO to understand what they value most:

- Supportive teachers, coaches, and principals that work with them everyday
- Opportunities for students to not just have a voice, but to feel empowered
- Extra-curricular activities and supports, including after-school options and mental health resources
- Dual enrollment opportunities

## Students also called out specific improvements they want to see including:

- Ensuring equitable resources across schools, equitable access to schools, and greater equity in student representation
- Increasing post-secondary options
- Strengthening the diversity of staff
- Implementing more innovative use of AI
- Offering school lunches that are more culturally diverse and allergy-friendly
- Addressing lack of basic supplies in bathrooms and improved maintenance



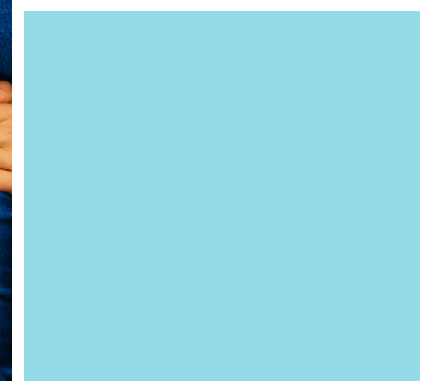
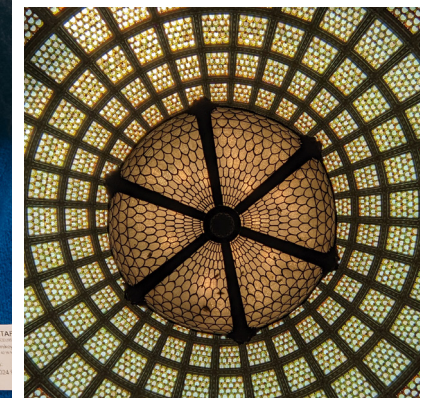


# ABOUT Chicago Public Schools

**Our mission** is to provide a high-quality public education for every child, in every neighborhood, that prepares each for success in college, career, and civic life.

**We are proud to be one of the fastest-improving school Districts in the country, and a leader among big city school systems.** CPS has made measurable progress in critical areas over the past several years, including record-high graduation rates (84%), tremendous growth in reading proficiency, and one of the strongest post-pandemic academic recoveries among large urban districts. We have launched an ambitious 5-year strategic plan, rooted in culturally relevant curriculum and restorative principles that are rigorous and engaging, so every student has joyful learning experiences.

**Despite our recent progress, we know our mission is far from complete.** We are committed to closing opportunity gaps, especially for our Black and Latino students, supporting the needs of our vibrant and expanding immigrant communities, adding more students and families to our school enrollment, and ensuring that our highest-need schools receive the resources and supports required for transformative success.





# ABOUT Chicago Public Schools

## Student Enrollment

2024-2025 20th Day Enrollment - Total and by Grade

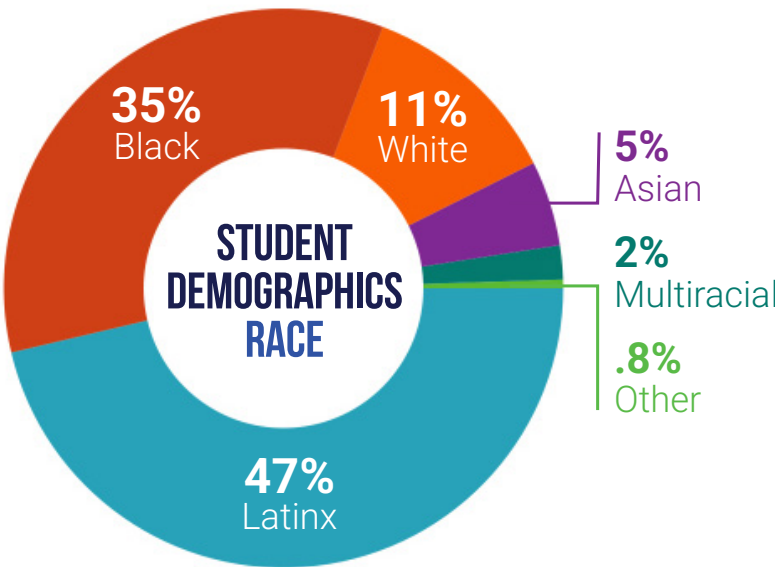
Total Students Enrolled **325,305**

Pre-K **17,589**

Kindergarten  
**21,233**

Secondary  
(9-12)  
**101,948**

Elementary (1-8)  
**182,481**



## Demographics on Student Enrollment

### PRIORITY GROUPS

2024-2025 20th Day Enrollment

Number of Students by Priority Group

Economically Disadvantaged **228,466**

English Learners **79,833**

Students with Disabilities **51,910**

Students in Temporary Living Situations **11,931**

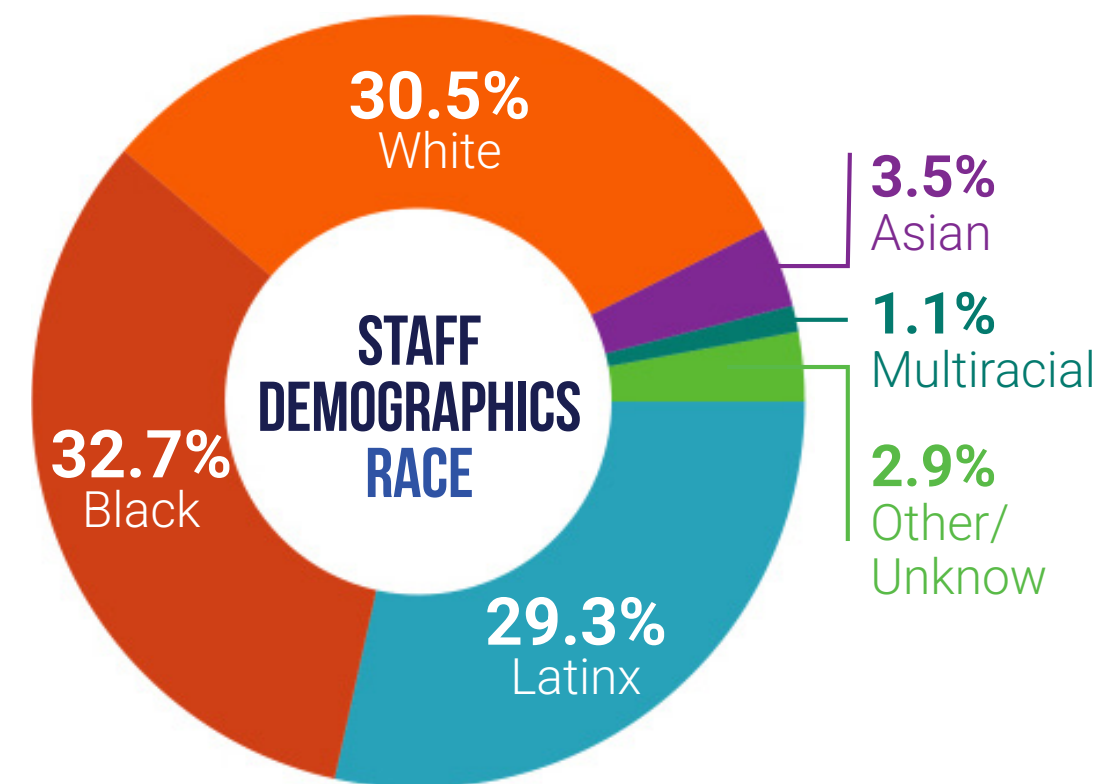
**182** Languages Spoken



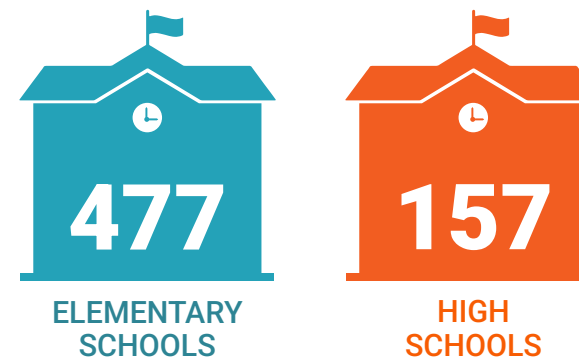


# ABOUT Chicago Public Schools

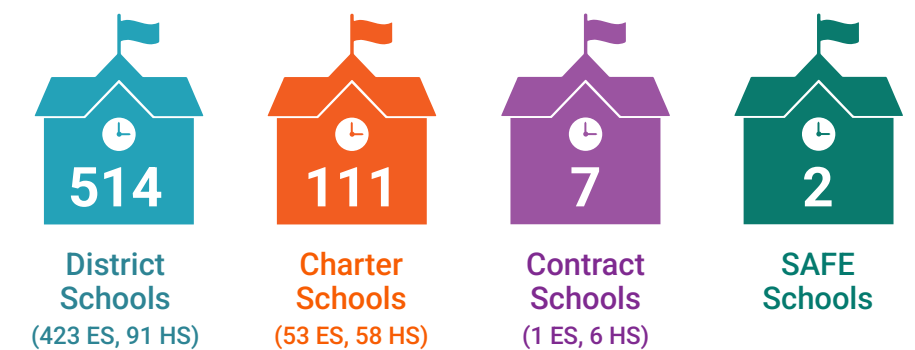
**45,319** Employees



**Number of Schools** **634** total



**Number of Schools**  
by governance type





# ABOUT Chicago Public Schools

## What should candidates know about CPS, or what makes CPS unique among public school systems?

### Local School Councils

In the city of Chicago, Local School Councils (LSCs) serve as a governing body for each District-managed school in CPS. Comprised of parents, community, educational, and student members, LSCs serve as an important vehicle for participatory democracy, providing a wide variety of stakeholders an opportunity to make important decisions about education at the school level.

#### Local School Councils are responsible for:

- Selecting or renewing contract principals
- Engaging in the annual evaluation of contract principal's professional practices
- Approving the school based academic Continuous Improvement Work Plan (CIWP)
- Approving the alignment of budgetary resources to the CIWP

### Labor relationships

It is crucial for the new Superintendent/CEO of Chicago Public Schools to maintain strong, positive working relationships with labor unions to ensure stability, collaboration, and trust across the District. Productive partnerships with unions help create a supportive environment for educators and staff, ultimately benefiting student outcomes and school communities.

### Board Governance

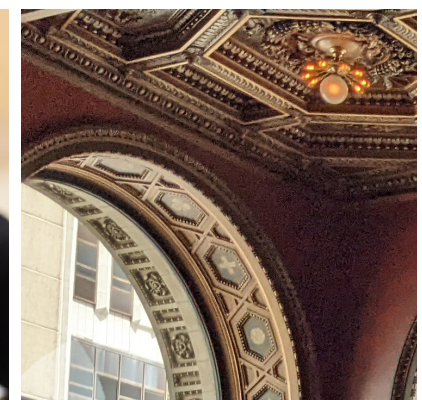
The Board is responsible for the governance, organizational, and financial oversight of CPS.

It establishes policies, standards, goals, and initiatives to ensure accountability and to provide a high quality, world-class education that prepares CPS students for success in college, work, and life in the 21st century.

The Board currently consists of 20 members: 10 appointed by the mayor, including the Board President, and 10 elected representatives from individual districts. It is the largest governing body of any public school system in the United States.

In 2027, the Board will transition to a fully elected governing body.

The Board is committed to selecting a leader who upholds the highest standards of educational excellence, equity, and accountability—a bold, visionary individual who can collaborate with communities and work alongside the Board to bring unity, drive stability, and advance CPS' 5-Year Strategic Plan.





# ABOUT Our 5-Year Strategic Plan Success 2029: Together We Rise

CPS students have been making major progress, but we know this progress has not been felt equally across our city, and it has not been nearly enough to outweigh the structural and historical inequities that continue to hold students back from achieving their full potential.

**Together We Rise** is our guide to accelerate the proven practices that have resulted in student success in the past while prioritizing areas that reflect the new approaches we believe will disrupt the cycles of inequity in our District. **Learn more at** [cps.edu/fiveyearplan](https://cps.edu/fiveyearplan)

## Graduate Profile

Our graduate profile outlines the holistic competencies that our students need to thrive after they graduate from high school and our vision for their postsecondary success.



**Ethical and  
Collaborative Leaders**



**Inquisitive  
Learners**



**Empowered  
Decision Makers**



**Engaged Community  
Members**



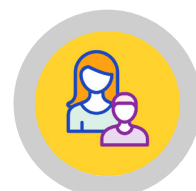
**Adaptable and  
Independent Thinkers**

## Core Values

Our core values guide the work we do every day for our students. By grounding ourselves in these values, we strengthen coherence and find common ground as we work together across the District to implement programs, services and initiatives.



**Student  
Centered**



**Whole  
Child**



**Equity**



**Academic  
Excellence**



**Community  
Partnership**



**Continuous  
Learning**





# ABOUT Our 5-Year Strategic Plan Together We Rise

Our strategic plan sets a universal vision for **every student**, **every school**, and **every community** — and lists the areas where we must improve to meet the goal.

**EVERY STUDENT** has a rigorous, joyful, and equitable daily learning experience

► **Targeted Priorities:**

**Black Student Success:** Develop and implement a plan to improve daily learning experiences for Black students and eliminate opportunity gaps.

**Multilingual Pathways:** Offer multiple pathways for students to become proficient in more than one language.

**Students with Disabilities:** Ensure the rightful presence of every student with disabilities so they can fully engage in high-quality instruction at their grade level.

**Early Learning:** Create high-quality and comprehensive learning experiences for students in preschool through 2nd grade that are aligned to their future learning.

**Postsecondary Success:** Increase opportunities to earn college credit and advanced certifications in high school.

**EVERY SCHOOL** creates the conditions and implements the practices to drive continuous improvement through an equity lens

► **Targeted Priorities:**

**Connectedness and Well-being:** Create robust support systems and align resources to meet students' diverse needs, ensuring a safe and supportive school community.

**Exceptional and Diverse Talent:** Recruit, retain, support, and develop exceptional and diverse talent at all levels.

**21st Century Learning Environments:** Co-design and implement the Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP) with input from the community to create modern, efficient, healthy, green, safe, and equitable conditions for 21st-century learning.

**Modernization of Technology and Systems:** Modernize existing technology and systems using feedback from students, educators, and families to enhance daily learning experiences.

**Equitable Funding Model:** Refine, through analysis of strengths and weaknesses, the funding model methodology implemented in SY2025 that aims to prioritize and allocate people, time, and money to align with levels of need and opportunity to create quality experiences for all students, incorporating educator, family, and student voices

**EVERY COMMUNITY** has inclusive and collaborative partnerships for thriving schools

► **Targeted Priorities:**

**Community Schools:** Provide the resources and support needed to transform schools to be the anchors of their neighborhood through community schools models, including the expansion of Sustainable Community Schools.

**Preschool to High School Pathways in Neighborhood Schools:** Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for improving preschool to high school graduation pathways in neighborhoods across the city.





# WHY CHICAGO

## What we love about Chicago

- Chicago has been voted the Best Big City in the US 8 years in a row (by Condé Nast Traveler)
- Over 2.7 million residents
- 77 unique neighborhoods
- Over 40 colleges and universities in the Chicagoland area
- A broad coalition of community-based and philanthropic organizations dedicated to supporting CPS

## A city in a garden

- 600 parks
- 500 playgrounds
- 70 nature and bird sanctuaries
- 29 beaches
- 26 miles of open lake front
- 303 miles of bike lanes

## A foodie destination

- 7,300 restaurants
- 26 Michelin-starred restaurants

## Arts and Culture

- Over 60 museums, including the world-famous Art Institute of Chicago, Field Museum, and Museum of Science and Industry
- Home to 200 professional dance companies (including Joffrey Ballet and Hubbard Street Dance)
- Birthplace of Gospel, Electric Blues, House, Juke, Foot Work, and Drill
- Host to popular music festivals every year
- Theatre capital of the US with 250+ theatre companies

## Sports Destination

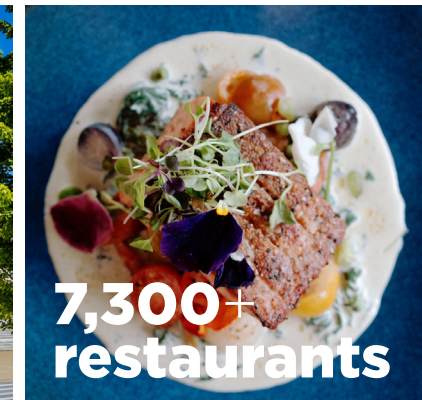
- Named Best Sports City (by Sporting News 3 times)
- 8 major league sports teams



2.7m+  
residents



60+ Museums



7,300+  
restaurants



29  
beaches



77 Unique  
neighborhoods



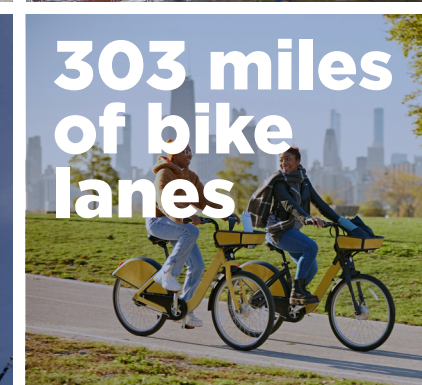
3rd largest  
city in USA



Best City  
8 years in  
a row



8 major league  
sports teams



303 miles  
of bike  
lanes