

Aug 28, 2025, Board Meeting Written Comments
Received between Tuesday, Aug 26th and Friday, Aug 29th Submitted via
Written Comments Form

1	<p>The current transportation model is broken, and until we embrace alternative options to supplement traditional school bus routes, thousands of local kids will continue to be at a disadvantage.</p> <p>That's why legislation like HB 989 House Amendment #1 matters. In short, HB 989 increases the pool of safe, qualified drivers and routes. It also gives parents and caregivers the options to track rides in real time. The bill would allow participating school districts to contract with vetted, third-party transportation providers – giving them flexibility to serve high-need students who too often fall through the cracks. The program would focus specifically on students experiencing homelessness, students with disabilities, foster youth who face frequent placement changes, and students who live outside of traditional bus routes. In other words, it's a smart, measured step that gives school leaders one more tool to meet the urgent needs of their most vulnerable students.</p> <p>This is a link to HB 989 https://www.ilga.gov/Legislation/BillStatus/FullText?LegDocId=204283&DocName=10400HB0989ham001&DocNum=989&DocTypeID=HB&LegID=156667&GAID=18&SessionID=114&SpecSess=&Session=</p>
2	<p>CPS Core Cadres did not receive retro pay. CPS has not responded to numerous inquiries. A few responses to individual Core Cadres from the CPS Payroll Director state that Core Cadres were overpaid last year.</p> <p>A CTU attorney requested CPS to provide proof of overpayment, which has not been provided. For the record, Core Cadres were never told they were overpaid the entire school year, 2024-2025. We have seen no documentation confirming that.</p> <p>Also be aware that CPS Core Cadres are bargaining unit employees, which means their pay falls under the CTU contract. Not paying Core Cadres retro pay is a violation of the contract and agreement between CTU and CPS. Please investigate this issue, as Core Cadres are entitled to retro pay. I do not know how many are affected, but the lowest possible number is 170 employees.</p> <p>Currently Core Cadres are filing grievances with CTU. Illinois law and statutes state that wage claims may be filed with the Illinois Dept. of Labor. This will result in retro payment, 5% monthly interest, in addition to administrative fees and penalties paid by CPS.</p> <p><u>Please take action to insure ALL CPS employees receive retro pay which CPS agreed to in writing.</u></p>
3	<p>Good afternoon Board Members,</p> <p>My name is Angelica Juarez, mother of three school age children, as a parent and advocate for my kids educational rights. I am reaching out to you all on this the 28th day of August 2025 to plead and persuade you all to vote in favor of CEO's King proposed Balanced Budget, which ensured stability for educators and our school communities in the present and for the future of our city's educational system. In times of uncertainty and instability we all must have the courage to stand up for what is right and just and work towards what is best for all of our Chicago children. The time has come for all of you to show your courage and sense of righteousness in the face of injustice and unfairness. May God be with you and may his divine wisdom guide you all to make the best decision for our wonderful children educational future. I thank you for your time and devotion.</p>
4	<p>Good afternoon, Chicago Public Schools Board members, CPS staff and parents. My name is John Paul Jones, President of Sustainable Englewood Initiatives (SEI) and Picture Your Parks Team of Grow Greater Englewood (GGE). We greatly appreciate the administration interest to expand education instead of reducing course opportunities through the Sustainable Communities Programming. Most interested in seeing the Urban Prep - Sustainable Communities program application include public access and collaboration with the Chicago Park District to the indoor swimming pool. The community of Englewood needs access to the indoor pool, once afforded to</p>

	<p>the public, during the initial charter school contract. The Heat Vulnerability of residents is very real and the community needs climate and Cook center protection.</p> <p>Also, we would hope CPS will add to its sustainable community school program the Earle School Annex building. Built in 1972, the annex can serve as a pre k - 5 th grade option for short distance learning and as a Green Industry STEM model. The main Earle School is currently under construction as an affordable housing development. West Englewood needs a school for primary students in order to head off pedestrian injuries due to traffic safety and crashes. In closing, please consider this request for 2026 Planning as part of the Black Student Success model. Both recommendations will satisfy the facility and space utilization plan. Thanks for your consideration.</p>
5	<p>Dear Board Members,</p> <p>Please vote to approve the budget as proposed by Dr. King. We appreciate the public information sessions and opportunities to be heard. At the two sessions I attended, attendees opposed making the pension payment for the city or taking out additional, high interest debt. CPS level of debt is unsustainable, and we cannot make it worse. The cost of debt servicing is overwhelming. As board members, CPS must consider its students and not just help the Mayor try to balance the City's budget using CPS funds. that historically were not used for this purpose. It is the City that has the obligation to pay CPS half of any TIF surplus; CPS is not obligated to pay the pensions. Voters and taxpayers are watching. No new debt or pension payments. Thank you.</p>
6	<p>CPS is failing to pay Core Cadre Substitute (Guest) Teachers their back pay from the latest agreed upon contract. Instead payroll is flat out lying and not providing evidence of their false claims. The have caused great hardship, pain, and suffering.</p>
7	<p>Hello, I'm writing to inquire about eCPS's process for requesting an independent auditor to evaluate school spending if concerns of illegal spending are reported by an LSC. Given the reduction in the budget and CPS's request for additional state funding, I'm particularly concerned about the fact that knowingly illegal reported spending, such as the purchase of extracurricular uniforms and clothing exceeding \$1,000 without LSC approval, has gone unchecked. As a result, approximately \$50,000 that should have gone toward our children, is lost with no known attempt to recoup through legal action against the individuals responsible for the illegal activity. These are taxpayer dollars, and if principals are not able to effectively manage spending and their employees' spending, they should not be allowed to continue in their roles or lose signing authority. Additionally, the money should be recouped as a priority before requesting further state funding.</p> <p>To address this issue, I propose the implementation of an automated electronic system across CPS that reports spending requests exceeding \$1,000 or multiple requests of the same amount to the LSC chair. This system should require electronic sign-off and approval from the chair. Furthermore, the District should track and block any distributions from accounts without LSC approval and conduct random checks by independent auditors.</p> <p>In today's age of AI, I fail to understand why this process is still conducted using paper and pencil or Excel spreadsheets. It's time for us to clean up our own backyards before yelling for others to do so and implement more efficient and effective systems. Thank you for your attention to this matter.</p>
8	<p>As a CPS parent, I urge you to approve Dr. Macquiline King's proposed budget. Her fair and balanced budget is exactly what the district needs at this moment to continue to support students and staff and to continue to provide an excellent education to my kids and every other child in Chicago.</p>
9	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I am writing as a constituent of District 6 and Board members Anusha Thotakura and Jessica Biggs to voice my *support* for the budget proposal set forth by Interim CEO King.</p> <p>One of the major points of contention in the debate is that it does not guarantee, in lieu of additional revenue, that CPS will provide \$175M to support the city's pension payments. The alternative idea supported by Mayor Johnson does cover this cost among others, but only by taking out a loan at major future cost.</p>

Pension payments are the city's responsibility from a legal standpoint. The city of Chicago is struggling financially, due to major large-scale factors such as poor fiscal management in its recent past - for example, selling off contracts and public property usage rights at colossal long-term and even medium-term losses and taking out unaffordable loans just like many opponents of this budget suggest doing - and poor tax policies at higher levels than municipal that sap money from economically productive and infrastructurally efficient urban areas like our city to effectively subsidize affluent, corporate spending-favoring suburban homes and further development that are now and will continue to be net tax losses. Of course that is our problem as residents of Chicago, like it or not, and as voters and leaders in our communities ourselves we can start to change that and should try. But CPS as an institution cannot influence these policies nor fix the financial problems they create for our city; it may be able to help sequester those problems for a short time, but that's the most it will achieve, and it can only hurt itself by trying.

Critics argue that this budget proposal, by not providing the city that \$175M, will make CPS a poor partner to city government. That may well be the perception of the alderpeople and the mayor, but again, the city's struggle to balance its own budget is a result of long-term policy choices from the city and state governments. Those policies are not going to change until they are proven to be ineffective and unsustainable, so if the city of Chicago has to fiscally fall on its face to prove it, that is going to happen. CPS cannot and frankly should not prevent it.

Chicago Public Schools' purpose is to create the brightest, most resilient possible future by giving our students a quality education that enables them to create and utilize opportunities to build a financially and socially strong future and contribute to our city's economy, culture, and community. CPS cannot do that by borrowing against that very same future; a school system that is focused on our children in the long-term must plan for long-term sustainability. With that in mind, I ask for your vote in favor of the budget proposed by Interim CEO King.

Thank you for your time.

10 Dear Members of the Chicago Board of Education,

My name is Karen Izquierdo, a CPS parent leader serving as Chair of the Local School Council at Shields Elementary, Secretary of our Parent Advisory Council, and a member of the Parent Board of Governors. I am deeply invested in the future direction of our district and in the upcoming leadership transition. Today, I want to emphasize the importance of prioritizing literacy, afterschool, and equity in CPS leadership.

As you continue the Superintendent/CEO search process, I urge you to ensure that the priorities reflected in the community prospectus—equity, communication, fiscal responsibility, and community-centered leadership—also include a clear commitment to afterschool programs and literacy initiatives. At Shields, afterschool and summer programs supported by BPNC have been a lifeline for working families and a critical support for students' academic and social development. Cuts to these programs harm the very children who rely on CPS for stability, enrichment, and opportunity.

Our community is also working hard to strengthen family literacy through projects like one I am currently developing in Brighton Park to provide free access to literature for bilingual students and families, as well as through community book drives and parent-led initiatives. These efforts align with the Board's stated goals of innovative systems thinking and capacity building, as they empower parents and communities to partner with schools in meaningful ways.

As you evaluate candidates for permanent CEO, I ask that you prioritize leaders who will protect and expand programs that nurture students academically, socially, and culturally, and who will honor the voices of families calling for these resources to remain intact.

Thank you for your commitment to transparency and for creating avenues for parents like me to share our perspectives during this critical moment for CPS.

Respectfully,
Karen Izquierdo
CPS Parent Leader | Shields Elementary

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- 11 As a CPS parent, education researcher, and former educator, I urge you to approve Dr. Macquiline King's proposed budget. Her fair and balanced budget is exactly what the district needs at this moment to continue to support students and staff and to continue to provide an excellent education to my daughter and every other child in Chicago.
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****ATTACHMENTS****

Good Afternoon, Chicago Board of Education

My name is Virginia Jimenez-Del Toro, and I am a proud parent of four amazing kids, two of whom attend CPS schools: a senior at Taft High School and 1st grader at Inter-American Magnet School who has an IEP. I am also a retired CPS principal with over 15 years of administrative experience and 30 years as an educator serving our city's children.

I am here today to speak on behalf of the parent community of Inter-American Magnet School. While I stand here today talking to the board, I am very aware of what this means for me as an active parent of Inter-American Magnet School, as I have experienced firsthand a leadership style grounded in placing fear into others and using retaliatory actions towards anyone who shares their truth about what is occurring at our school.

Since we arrived at IAMS, I have been a parent volunteer, the Treasurer of the Friends Of parent organization, and an active and dedicated member of this community. I was also one of several parent volunteers in my daughter's kindergarten classroom while the teacher was on medical leave. During that period, I witnessed a child attacking and choking another student while a substitute teacher sat and watched. I am the parent volunteer who saw a student force himself on another student in an aggressive sexual manner. I am the parent volunteer who had to convince the substitute teacher to report these incidents to the school administrator. When these incidents were reported, they were ignored. The substitute teacher was allowed to continue to work at the school as if nothing had occurred; procedures and policies that are in place to protect all students were dismissed, and the incidents continued to occur in that classroom. In particular, incidents of aggressive sexual behavior where the student suffered both physical and emotional harm.

As a matter of fact, the aggressive behaviors increased, and parents' concerns, communication, and requests for interventions were ignored. Since these incidents occurred, the parents of this particular classroom have been discriminated against and were no longer allowed to volunteer.

Throughout all of last year, more and more parents have come out to speak at LSC meetings and at board meetings to share their stories of children being bullied, experiencing extreme aggression, schools' failure to communicate with parents regarding incidents that pertained to their children, and when seeking answers were completely ignored.

Two weeks into the start of the school year, and we continue to see the same pattern of behavior from this administration in particular, in cases of students being bullied. There are many other situations, but I am not at liberty to share. Has CPS not learned its lesson from past years?

It has been extremely clear to me, especially with my background, that CPS policies have been ignored and the rights of students have been violated. CPS policies are not left to interpretation but are written clearly to ensure that all students are protected. It is the role of a school principal to abide by these policies to ensure the safety of all students and that all students have a safe space to learn.

The board has had a multitude of parents who have come to these meetings to share their experiences, they have written letters and met with board members to express their concerns, and despite all the information that has been shared, nothing is being done to protect our children.

We recently were informed that the current investigation against Principal Zayas has concluded. We are asking that the findings be shared with our school community and that CPS make the recommendation to remove Mr. Zayas from his role as principal of IAMS. I know this board has faced many challenges, but I also have faith that they will remember that they are here to serve and protect children. Anything less is unacceptable, as it is our personal responsibility to do so.

Our parent community will continue to fight for our children. Today is a great example. Let's fight for children just as much as we fight for money because our children are precious.

Thank you for allowing me the space to speak on behalf of our parent community.

Virginia Jimenez-Del Toro
Mom, Advocate, Educator, and Lifelong Learner

Testimony to Chicago Board of Education re Racial and other Bullying

I am providing written testimony on behalf of the Chicago Area Chapter of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council. This is in response to the racial and other bullying that happened to Sher [REDACTED] oldest daughter during the three years she was a student at Wildwood Elementary School, which has been reported by WBEZ and the Chicago Sun-Times.

Reports of bullying need to be investigated. Over the past three school years Wildwood's staff investigated and confirmed 29 incidents of discrimination or harassment involving students, according to data released through a public records request.

The Wildwood Principal and staff tried training and restorative practices to address the bullying, but such efforts were ineffective. CPS's Student Code of Conduct does not allow for serious consequences, and thus students who are bullying other students are not held accountable.

CPS's Student Code of Conduct needs to be amended so that, when an investigation establishes that bullying has occurred, the bully can be held accountable. For example, the student who has bullied should be suspended until his or her parent or parents or guardian has come in for a conference, after which the bully must apologize to the student who was bullied, and promise to not do so again, before the suspension is lifted. If a subsequent investigation establishes that the student, who had promised to stop bullying, has continued to bully the targeted student, then the bully would be automatically expelled from that school.

Dr. Angel Alvarez, CPS Board Written Public Comments Meeting 8/28/2025

Dear CPS Board Members:

I want to express my sincere gratitude for the board members who have actively addressed concerns about the budget and its impact on students facing additional challenges. For example, Superintendent/CEO King has held multiple public budget sessions to address community concerns.¹ I appreciate board member Gutierrez for addressing the shared sentiment that the budget deficit was framed in a way that tacitly blamed students with disabilities for the current debt, and thank board members Cluster and Lopez for entering this into the record.² Board member Pope raised an important point about moving from generalities to specifics,³ and I ask that we go further by providing details on school-level funding by year. Board member Thotakura made an excellent point about developing contingencies to deal with long-term debt⁴—contingencies that I argue should have been in place, as the current fiscal situation was predictable but not communicated in past public budget presentations.

CPS's budget situation is the result of poor planning, inaccurate projections, and a lack of accountability for how those decisions impacted our students, particularly those who have been most underserved. Transportation serves as a microcosm of the broader issues within CPS. My analysis of CPS's transportation operations—compiled from eight years of budget reports and multiple FOIA requests (many still pending)—reveals a consistent pattern since FY22 of failing to accurately account for spending. Poor planning is evident in how CPS sources vendors, often granting them pricing power that results in higher costs. Inaccurate projections are clear when CPS Transportation exceeded their projections by \$167 million over the past four years, with full FY25 numbers still pending. Finally, accountability is lacking when the school year starts and buses are not available to pick up students with disabilities. CPS is now spending two-thirds more money to transport 6,000 fewer students than it did in 2020, but still is not meeting the needs of our students with disabilities.

The following table illustrates CPS Transportation Budget data from FY19 to FY26 (data compiled from CPS Budget Reports and multiple FOIA requests):

CPS Transportation Budget FY19-FY25				Positions		CPS Students Transported					
	Proposed	Ending	Actual	Proposed	Ending	DL Transported	Non-DL Transported	DL Financial Incentive Program	Non-DL Financial Incentive Program	Total	
FY26	\$204,167,231			719						-	
FY25	\$139,774,123	\$202,333,084		758	758					-	
FY24	\$146,298,848	\$161,943,487	\$194,164,901	843	843	8,033	520	3,893	18	12,464	
FY23	\$136,270,667	\$139,441,685	\$166,634,728	841	841	8,456	6,439	2,041	2	16,938	
FY22	\$130,963,572	\$139,332,360	\$156,934,342	840	841	7,850	5,656	1,475	1,062	16,043	
FY21	\$125,921,743	\$126,566,926	\$84,694,007	839	839	4,303	4,161	-	-	8,464	
FY20	\$122,140,951	\$120,553,382	\$124,182,170	839	839	9,400	10,525	-	-	19,925	
FY19	\$121,928,945	\$121,637,041	\$119,915,871	839	839	8,888	10,672	-	-	19,560	

Therefore, I ask that we break this cycle of poor planning, inaccurate projections, and lack of accountability in our budgeting. I oppose the accumulation of debt that will burden the future of our children. While I understand that last-minute pleas may not change your position, I trust that your decisions are made with the best interests of our students in mind. I urge you to demand greater transparency and accountability by requiring CPS to release detailed projections for debt payments and school-level funding data by year. Questions about how CPS will sustain itself amid declining enrollment and rising operational costs—including utilities—remain unanswered. I thank you for your time and hope we can meet soon.

Be well,

Dr. Angel Alvarez

References:

1. <https://www.cps.edu/about/finance/budget/budget-2026/community-engagement/>
2. July 24, 2025 Board Meeting at 0:52, <https://www.cpsboe.org/meetings/meeting-videos/4405>
3. July 24, 2025 Board Meeting at 4:49, <https://www.cpsboe.org/meetings/meeting-videos/4405>
4. July 24, 2025 Board Meeting at 5:02, <https://www.cpsboe.org/meetings/meeting-videos/4405>
5. CPS Budget Reports FY2019 through FY2026, <https://www.cps.edu/about/finance/budget/>

LANDMARKING BOWEN HIGH SCHOOL

CPS BOARD MEETING - AUGUST 28, 2025

Bowen High School is a stunning landmark-worthy 1910 architectural gem designed by Dwight Perkins. Not-for-profit Bowen High School Alumni Association is working with Ramsey Historic Consultants Inc. to apply for Bowen's inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.



Noteworthy features include:

- The Prairie Style and Chicago School façade and marble-lined entry way
- The auditorium's original dome, decorative ceiling, lunette windows, and patterned wall tiles
- Original cast iron staircases
- Glazed tile cafeteria

Chicago Public Schools already has 5 landmark buildings in its portfolio - Phillips, DuSable, Ward Elementary, Lindbloom - and Bowen's sister school, Carl Schurz High School. Schurz was also designed by Perkins and built on identical plans as Bowen. Schurz has already attained National Register as well as City of Chicago landmark status. We hope to follow in Schurz's footsteps and add a 6th landmark building to your portfolio.

Landmarking Bowen will:

- Boost pride in the school's students, teachers, administrators, and staff – not to mention South Chicago and the city at large
- Spotlight the school's architectural and historical contributions to Chicago
- Focus attention on other significant landmarks nearby

The Alumni Association hopes that the CPS Board approves of this National Register effort.

Note that the National Register is an honorific program that places no restrictions on property owners to maintain or alter the property.