

**November 18, 2020 Board Meeting
Written Comments
Received between Monday, November 16th and Thursday, November 19th
Submitted via Written Comments Form**

1 November 9, 2020

Chicago Public School Board
1 N. Dearborn, #950
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Chicago Public School Board Members:

On behalf of Healing to Action and our base of survivor-leaders, we write this letter to comment on the proposal to rescind board report 13-0227-PO1 and adopt a new comprehensive sexual education policy. Comprehensive sexual education is critical to our communities and we want to ensure that this new policy outlines essential resources to ensure that youth - particularly youth in black and brown communities on Chicago's South and West sides - have access to the promise of this policy.

Many of our leaders represent many survivor communities in Chicago including immigrants, black and brown survivors, survivors with disabilities, and LGBTQ survivors. In 2018, survivor-leaders participated in our Healing Generations program - an eight-week leadership program for survivors of gender-based violence. Through that work, they learned about concepts like consent, how to identify gender-based violence, and how to support other isolated survivors in their communities. In learning about these concepts, they would initiate conversations with their children who attend CPS schools. They were shocked when they learned that their children did not know about concepts like consent, healthy relationships, or the breadth of gender-based violence. Research shows that comprehensive sexual education is a crucial tool to prevent gender based violence and other violence in our communities.

As they began to investigate why, they understood that their children were not alone. Many CPS students did not have access to the comprehensive sexual education promised under the 2013 policy. In fact, after conducting a FOIA of CPS' 2018 data gathered from schools self-reporting on their compliance, we were dismayed to learn that 70% of CPS schools were not in full compliance with the existing policy requirements. Many of those schools are located in Chicago's South and West sides, in majority black and brown communities.

From November 2019 through March 2020, Healing to Action's survivor-leaders partnered with the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Comprehensive Sex Ed Now, Centro de Trabajadores Unidos, Assata's Daughters and the Chicago Teachers' Union to host community info and listening sessions to learn more about community members' experiences with comprehensive sexual education, and what they thought would be needed. We centered the voices of youth, educators, and caregivers - stakeholders that are most impacted by the lack of implementation of the comprehensive sexual education policy.

After collecting information from over 200 community members, we learned that the following resources must be included in the the new policy for successful implementation:

Curriculum content:

The new policy should ensure that community members like caregivers, have better access to the curriculum than the process that currently exists;
The new policy should clarify and expand on its definition of "culturally accessible." Specifically, the policy should consider ensuring that educators are provided rigorous training around ensuring that the curriculum content is adapted to be culturally specific.

Educator requirements:

The new policy should ensure that comprehensive sexual education educators have clear requirements to teach the subject. Specifically, caregivers and youth voiced the importance of the educator to have a background in science or health;

The new policy must reflect additional resources and support for educators to accurately teach the contents of the curriculum;

The new policy must ensure educators receive high-quality, on-going, annual training for educators;

Sexual education must be written as part of the job description for the educator position to sustain comprehensive sexual education, rather than the current system that depends on the interest/availability of an individual educator;

The policy should clarify that the role of outside consultants should not replace the obligation that the school has, but instead should supplement. Outside consultants cannot provide culturally relevant comprehensive sexual education if they are not part of the community.

Diverse learners:

The policy needs to expand on the accessibility of comprehensive sexual education for diverse learners. Members of our coalition want this curriculum to be tailored to the needs of the diverse learner population, particularly for students with intellectual disabilities;

Caregivers and youth also want to ensure that the educators are provided high-quality, on-going training to work with diverse learners.

Caregiver support:

If the district continues to consider caregivers as primary educators of comprehensive sexual education, the district must provide resources to ensure caregivers can meaningfully do so.

Many, if not all, caregivers have not received comprehensive sexual education in their past.

Therefore, caregivers seek additional support including an annual orientation for all CPS parents; information and training about the curriculum contents and guidance for how to respond and work with you; access to the full curriculum; and a peer to peer program to destigmatize comprehensive sexual education.

Lastly, the policy should provide a way to ensure these resources are accessible by ensuring that funding is part of this policy. In connecting with educators, the number one concern of principals has been a lack of funding to implement comprehensive sexual education. By stating explicitly in the policy that the district will provide funding to schools, the district can ensure that the inequitable access to comprehensive sexual education for South and West side communities changes.

With remote learning in place, we have heard from caregivers, educators, and youth that sex education is not even happening. We are particularly concerned for students now who do not have a safe place at home, who experience abuse in the home, or who continue to live in fear at home because of their identity or sexuality. By ensuring comprehensive sexual education is in place, this can support both youth having a safe space and engaging caregivers so that they can reinforce those lessons at home and in our communities.

Sincerely,

Karla Altmayer
Co-founder, Co-director
Healing to Action

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I am a mother to two CPS alumni, mother to one current CPS student, member of the Community Advisory Council for the Chicago Children's Advocacy Center, survivor of childhood sexual abuse, and a Chicago resident who has worked at the community level advocating for change in schools, our environment, and our economy for nearly twenty years.

Childhood sexual abuse is a public health crisis. Also, childhood sexual abuse is 100% preventable. Those who were already abused or at risk for abuse before the COVID-19 pandemic now face even greater challenges finding relief and freedom from abuse. The good news is the Chicago Public School Board can do something about it by investing in comprehensive sexual education and providing ample wraparound support in the form of trained educators, counselors, and other frontline staff.

According to the organization, Healing to Action, many CPS students did not have access to the comprehensive sexual education promised under the 2013 policy. In fact, after conducting a FOIA of CPS' 2018 data gathered from schools self-reporting on their compliance, we were dismayed to learn that 70% of CPS schools were not in full compliance with the existing policy requirements. Many of those schools are located in Chicago's South and West sides, in majority black and brown communities.

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Sincerely,

Jeanine Otte
4614 N. Lavergne Ave.
Chicago, IL 60630

3 I am a community member at KAN-WIN. I am writing to advocate for funding comprehensive sexual education led by the Office of Student Health and Wellness to ensure that sexual education is implemented equitably across Chicago. In order to ensure the success of the implementation of comprehensive sexual education, I ask for the new policy to include the following changes: in-school educators must have specific qualifications for teaching comprehensive sexual education such as a background in sex education or science; in-school educators must receive on-going training on an annual basis; funding to support a peer-to-peer program for youth to facilitate conversations around sexual health with each other; resources for the outside agencies providing technical assistance/training to educators, caregivers, and peer-youth educators; on-going technical support for in-school educators; caregivers must receive the

	<p>materials prior to the lessons, a list of questions they can expect, strategies to work with their children, and the opportunity to participate in an orientation about comprehensive sexual education on an annual basis - all opportunities must be accessible to non-English speakers; funding to support a peer-to-peer program for caregivers to de-stigmatize comprehensive sexual education; specialized training for educators to work with diverse learners. In order for this policy to truly be inclusive of gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, sexual behavior, race, and disability and promote an anti-racist pedagogy, the policy must be funded so that the current 70% of CPS youth who live in Chicago's South and West Side communities can access comprehensive sexual education. Comprehensive sexual education is a racial and gender justice issue.</p>
4	<p>I am a caregiver with LSNA. I am writing to advocate for funding comprehensive sexual education led by the Office of Student Health and Wellness to ensure that sexual education is implemented equitably across Chicago. In order to ensure the success of the implementation of comprehensive sexual education, I ask for the new policy to include the following changes: in-school educators must have specific qualifications for teaching comprehensive sexual education such as a background in sex education or science; in-school educators must receive on-going training on an annual basis; funding to support a peer-to-peer program for youth to facilitate conversations around sexual health with each other; resources for the outside agencies providing technical assistance/training to educators, caregivers, and peer-youth educators; on-going technical support for in-school educators; caregivers must receive the materials prior to the lessons, a list of questions they can expect, strategies to work with their children, and the opportunity to participate in an orientation about comprehensive sexual education on an annual basis - all opportunities must be accessible to non-English speakers; funding to support a peer-to-peer program for caregivers to de-stigmatize comprehensive sexual education; specialized training for educators to work with diverse learners. In order for this policy to truly be inclusive of gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, sexual behavior, race, and disability and promote an anti-racist pedagogy, the policy must be funded so that the current 70% of CPS youth who live in Chicago's South and West Side communities can access comprehensive sexual education. Comprehensive sexual education is a racial and gender justice issue.</p>
5	<p>I am a former student and community member with Sexpectations. I am writing to advocate for funding comprehensive sexual education led by the Office of Student Health and Wellness to ensure that sexual education is implemented equitably across Chicago. In order to ensure the success of the implementation of comprehensive sexual education, I ask for the new policy to include the following changes: in-school educators must have specific qualifications for teaching comprehensive sexual education such as a background in sex education or science; in-school educators must receive on-going training on an annual basis; funding to support a peer-to-peer program for youth to facilitate conversations around sexual health with each other; resources for the outside agencies providing technical assistance/training to educators, caregivers, and peer-youth educators; on-going technical support for in-school educators; caregivers must receive the materials prior to the lessons, a list of questions they can expect, strategies to work with their children, and the opportunity to participate in an orientation about comprehensive sexual education on an annual basis - all opportunities must be accessible to non-English speakers; funding to support a peer-to-peer program for caregivers to de-stigmatize comprehensive sexual education; specialized training for educators to work with diverse learners. In order for this policy to truly be inclusive of gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, sexual behavior, race, and disability and promote an anti-racist pedagogy, the policy must be funded so that the current 70% of CPS youth who live in Chicago's South and West Side communities can access comprehensive sexual education. Comprehensive sexual education is a racial and gender justice issue.</p>
6	<p>Como madre de un estudiante de CPS, Solo les pido a ustedes que entiendan, comprendan las necesidades de cada niño. Son unicos, son admirable y tambien aprenden en formas diferente. Me gustaria que los observation como un nino completo y no como un numero de CPS</p>
7	<p>Greetings everyone, I would like to say that the Board of Education was my 1st job that I had in my youth. I was honored to get a workers permit to just be able to join the workforce to work with children and Educators. This is my humble plea to you all: PLEASE have empathy, compassion and understanding for us parents and our children. We are doing the very best we can during this</p>

	<p>Covid-19 pandemic to keep ourselves and families happy, stable, and healthy. The education of our youth is very important, our LSC elections are very important, the Teachers / Staff of CPS Schools and Affiliates keeping their jobs is very important, however when is enough considered enough? When will the financial and statistical numbers be less important than risking the health of our children, and giving us parents peace of mind. When will Diverse Learners become more of a priority, than an afterthought. Please attentively listen to us when we say, WE will not compromise our Children's safety, mental, emotional nor physical health for anything, nor anyone. In addition to the screen time for our children doing online remote learning is absolutely unreasonably, unrealistically too long, and is causing burnouts for them and teachers. Somethings got to give... However, the precious lives and vital future of our children will not be the one's paying the price for this national, political, educational, genealogical experiment. So please my good people...Let's make wiser decisions, find common ground, be innovative, and bring common sense back.</p>
8	<p>I have asked this question in numerous CPS townhalls and other meetings where Dr. Jackson, Dr. Jones, and Ms. McDade were present over the past few months, and no one seems to have an answer:</p> <p>What happens if someone in a Pod has a Medical mask exemption? Will parents/families be notified if a child in the classroom Pod has a medical mask exemption? It would be critical for parents to know this when making a decision about whether to send their child to school in-person vs. virtual. For example, I might be leaning towards sending my child to school in-person, but if I knew that even just ONE child had a mask exemption, then I would choose virtual learning instead. This can be a general notice that does not identify the name of the student -- similar to the notice we receive when a student in the class has strep throat, flu, staph infection, etc.</p>
9	<p>Hello my name is Pierce Boyd-Bagby but I go by Mr.Pierce in my classroom. I'm a first year, first grade teacher, and it is a very interesting year, to start teaching. But I'm not here for myself I'm here to talk about all 26 of my amazing first graders. My first graders were able to build such a strong community in a time of uncertainty so it broke my heart to know their school was being concerned for demolition. My parents, who spent her entire life in Chicago end attended cps schools, compared a school to a community museum. The history and the stories within the walls of a school are scared and cannot be replaced by new architecture and new amenities. The collective memory that is shared by the members of this community is not replicable and I'm scared for my students and what this new future might hold for them. If you ask my class why I have 94% or more attendance every day it's because everyday they look forward to the one consistent thing they have: and that's the friendly faces and strong community that keeps them motivated. On behalf of Crown community academy of fine arts, do not close our school. We need it. Thanks</p>
10	<p>After hearing the plan to send back K-8, I am lost as to why CPS won't send back HS students as well. The impact that remote learning has had on education outcomes affects HS students as much as elementary students. I understand everything is basically TBD as of now, depending on where COVID numbers will be 3 months from now; however, I do want to urge the board to implement a plan for HS students to return or leave it up to the discretion of individual high schools and their families to vote and decide whether or not to send their high school students back. Some high schools are smaller, unlike Jones, Lane, and Whitney where you have over 1,000 students attending, so there is more of a limited risk for some to return over others.</p>
11	<p>CPS you serve the people of Chicago and you have not listened or even thought to ask us until after you come up with these "plans" Updating school facilities should definitely happen anyways but the joke that what has been done is enough to keep kids safe needs to stop. First many if not most schools that I have spoken with still have bathroom issues. No hot water in some, non working soap dispensers... you keep talking about the scientific evidence but only the parts that make you feel you did your job... you didn't. You say in your email that schools don't spread covid when the numbers say otherwise. The plan should be keep majority remote safely with their teachers who have had to bust butt to make up for your shortcomings and bring in special ed and others needing extra help to some onsite locations that are staffed as safely as possible... you haven't mentioned any of the staff members who have been Covid positive what was the count just for one day? Like 87? Not Acceptable!!!</p>

12	I understand academic centers are required by CPS to follow the HS schedule when it comes to potential return to in person school- why? TAFT AC is a perfect example of where AC could safely take place (in a separate building)
13	As a parent of a 7th grader at Taft Academic Center, I urge the board to reconsider opening the academic center for quarter 3, rather than linking these young students to their high school age neighbors. Students of this age group do not have the maturity or skills to organize themselves and work independently in a remote setting long term; we are already seeing negative effects to my son's motivation for school and attitude in general. He is desperate for social interaction and is NOT getting it given the circumstances. We chose the academic center for the excellent opportunities it may provide for our child and now we regret that we didn't keep him at his former school, which has an opening date to look forward to. Now it seems that the academic centers in the city have the worst scenario possible for them. This goes directly against the promise we were made that our middle school children would be treated according to their developmental age. We sincerely hope that you will reconsider this unfortunate stipulation to the reopening plan.

ATTACHMENTS

HEALING TO ACTION

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As they began to investigate why, they understood that their children were not alone. Many CPS students did not have access to the comprehensive sexual education promised under the 2013 policy. In fact, after conducting a FOIA of CPS’ 2018 data gathered from schools self-reporting on their compliance, we were dismayed to learn that 70% of CPS schools were not in full compliance with the existing policy

¹ Healing to Action defines gender-based violence as violence against a person because of their gender identity. This includes physical and psychological violence by intimate partners, sexual assault, rape and stalking. It also includes physical and psychological violence against people who do not conform to assigned gender roles like gay, lesbian, trans, intersex, and gender questioning people.

requirements. Many of those schools are located in Chicago's South and West sides, in majority black and brown communities.

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- Caregiver support:
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Lastly, the policy should provide a way to ensure these resources are accessible by ensuring that funding is part of this policy. In connecting with educators, the number one concern of principals has been a lack of funding to implement comprehensive sexual education. By stating explicitly in the policy that the district will provide funding to schools, the district can ensure that the inequitable access to comprehensive sexual education for South and West side communities changes.

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Sincerely,

Jeanine Otte
4614 N. Lavergne Ave.
Chicago, IL 60630

<p>Mi nombre es Consuelo Martinez. Soy madre de una estudiante de Back of the Yards college prep high school. No solo estoy representando a mi hija, también estoy representando a más de 200 padres alrededor de la ciudad.</p> <p>Con el aprendizaje remoto me he dado cuenta de que mi hija está aprendiendo más o menos bien. Pero también me he dado cuenta de que está teniendo problemas emocionales. En diferentes reuniones que he tenido con padres me di cuenta que otros niños están teniendo estos problemas. Hay niños que no están avanzando y están perdiendo tiempo de su desarrollo. No están comunicando y necesitan apoyo adicional con el aprendizaje en general y con el uso de tecnología.</p> <p>El distrito debe pedir a las escuelas que se enfoquen y atiendan al desarrollo socioemocional de cada niño- Más con los traumas y los cambios que han tenido por la pandemia. Se debe proveer estrategias y herramientas. También se tiene que establecer un tiempo para que los alumnos puedan socializar y relajarse en base a sus necesidades y sobre todo a sus edades.</p> <p>El distrito debe pedir a las escuelas un tiempo específico con supervisión para que los estudiantes puedan socializar y crear comunidad entre ellos. Pre covid, ya existía esta estructura. Por ejemplo cuando los estudiantes comían tenían la oportunidad de conversar con sus compañeros. Debe de haber una estructura para socializarse ahora con el aprendizaje remoto.</p> <p>Se debe atender a cada estudiante como un niño completo y no como un número más en CPS.</p>	<p>My name is Consuelo Martinez. I am the mother of a High School student at Back of the Yards College Prep. Not only am I here representing my daughter, I am also here representing more than 200 parents around the city.</p> <p>I have noticed that my daughter is kind of learning during COVID. I have also noticed that she is having some emotional problems. In different meetings I have been attending with parents, I have noticed that other students are experiencing the same problem. Some students are not advancing and are losing development time. They are not communicating and need additional support with remote learning in general and with adapting to technology.</p> <p>The district should require schools to focus and care for the socio emotional development of each child- more so with the traumas and changes the pandemic has brought. They need to provide strategies and tools. There also needs to be an established time for students to socialize and relax based on their needs and especially their ages.</p> <p>The district should require schools to have a specific time that is supervised for students to socialize and build community with each other. Pre covid, this structure existed. For example when students had lunch they had the opportunity to talk to their classmates. There needs to be a structure to socialize now with remote learning.</p> <p>We need to treat every student like a whole child and not just another number in CPS.</p>
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