

October 23, 2025

PERMANENT DEBARMENT OF JOSEPH SAMUELS AND LINDA HIGHTOWER**THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER REPORTS THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Board of Education of the City of Chicago (Board) permanently debar Respondents Joseph Samuels and Linda Hightower from doing any business with the Board, including working or volunteering.

The Board's Chief Procurement Officer mailed a Notice of Proposed Debarment to Respondents on July 23, 2025, initiating debarment proceedings against Respondents based on the Board's Debarment Policy. Respondent Samuels was hired by Board vendor United Transportation in 2018. Respondent Hightower worked as a bus aide for Board vendor, United Quick Bus.

Respondent Samuels engaged in inappropriate and unlawful sexual conduct with STUDENT A when STUDENT A was a CPS student. STUDENT A told Hightower that Samuels molested them. But Hightower did not report Samuels' sexual assault to law enforcement or DCFS. Samuels was fired by United Transportation in 2019. Samuels was also permanently banned from operating Board bus routes and transporting or assisting the transport of Board students. The OIG recommended that Samuels and Hightower be barred from working or volunteering for CPS.

Respondents failed to submit a written response to the Notice as required by the Board's Debarment Policy. All allegations in the Notice are therefore admitted. The Chief Operating Officer has reviewed the record and recommends permanent debarment.

Based on the facts in the record as defined in Section 4.5(10) of the Board's Debarment Policy, the Chief Operating Officer recommends that (1) all existing contracts between the Board and Respondents be terminated; (2) that Respondents be barred from doing business with CPS or otherwise working or volunteering on CPS property; (3) that Respondents be barred from participating as a subcontractor, vendor, or supplier under any Board contract; (4) that Respondents be barred from being hired or employed by CPS or volunteer for CPS; and (5) that Respondents be declared ineligible for the award of any new Board business.

The Board adopts and approves the recommendation of the Chief Operating Officer.

LSC REVIEW: LSC approval is not applicable to this report.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATUS: Affirmative Action review is not applicable to this report.

FINANCIAL: None.

GENERAL CONDITIONS: None.

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Charles Mayfield
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Chief Operating Officer

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM:

Signed by:
Elizabeth K. Barton
Elizabeth K. Barton
Acting General Counsel

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(HJ)