



Board of Education | City of Chicago

Board Meeting Written Comments

July 30, 2026

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July 30, 2026, Board Meeting Written Comments
Received between Tuesday, July 28th and Friday, July 31st Submitted via
Written Comments Form

1	Written Public Comment Chicago Board of Education Meeting July 30, 2026 Submitted by: Education Committee Chi North Lawndale Chamber of Commerce The Education Committee of the Chi North Lawndale Chamber of Commerce respectfully submits this written public comment to express our opposition to any proposal, initiative, or policy that places the institutional interests of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) above the educational needs of students, parents, school staff, and the communities our public schools are intended to serve. For far too long, many of the public conversations surrounding Chicago Public Schools have centered on organizational priorities rather than measurable student outcomes. We believe the purpose of our education system is first and foremost to educate children, equip teachers with the resources to teach effectively, support parents as partners in education, and prepare students for productive futures. Our Chamber represents business owners, educators, parents, nonprofit organizations, faith-based institutions, and community stakeholders who understand that a strong education system is the foundation of a strong local economy and a thriving community. We urge the Board of Education to evaluate every proposal based on one standard: Does this improve educational outcomes for students and strengthen partnerships with parents and communities? We encourage the Board to prioritize: * Student academic achievement and literacy. * Safe, stable, and productive learning environments. * Increased parent engagement and transparency. * Teacher support that directly improves classroom instruction. * Workforce readiness, career pathways, and entrepreneurship opportunities. * Responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources.
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* Accountability through measurable results rather than political advocacy.

We believe every stakeholder—including unions, administrators, elected officials, businesses, parents, and community organizations—should be held to the same expectation: decisions should be driven by what is demonstrably best for students.

When the interests of any organization conflict with the interests of children and families, we believe the Board has a responsibility to place students first.

The Chi North Lawndale Chamber of Commerce Education Committee remains committed to working collaboratively with Chicago Public Schools, educators, parents, and community partners to improve educational opportunities throughout North Lawndale and across the City of Chicago. We support policies rooted in accountability, transparency, academic excellence, and measurable student success.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Respectfully submitted,

Education Committee

Chi North Lawndale Chamber of Commerce

- 2 I am writing out of concern for the fact that the option to take the high school admissions test in languages besides English has been removed. It is my understanding that last year, 50 students entered selective enrollments via native language high school admissions test.

CPS leadership claims the change was made because, overall, students did better on the English language test than on the tests in other languages - but what is lacking in this analysis is the fact that no students took both. So this is comparing two different groups of students.

The problem with this analysis, is that students who chose to take the English-language admissions test on average did better - because choosing to take this test is a proxy for time in the US-school systems, giving students more access not only to English-language education, but also to American school standards. In the US, our schools place a high value on certain skills - like finding text evidence - that are not equally emphasized in other systems. Students choosing to take the English language test is not just a proxy for language, but a proxy for time spent in the American school system. Of course they are, on average, better prepared for the test.

Some students do come to the US shortly before the tests are offered, with schooling experiences that prepare them to be successful on the content of the test. The decision to offer the test in languages besides English is largely to serve these students, giving them the same opportunity to test into selective enrollment programs and programs like AP and IB centers as their peers who have spent



more time in schools in the US. (As a note - analysis should take care when looking at "ELL" data as a whole, because this is a homogenizing label that fails to represent the heterogeneous linguistic repertoires of students under its umbrella. Many students labeled as ELLs are experienced bilinguals who prefer to do academic tasks in English).

If CPS leadership wants to test their hypothesis (instead of just simplifying the process of signing a contract with a major test company like the ACT who only has an English-language offering), they would re-test those 50 students who tested into selective enrollments to show that they would still achieve the same results, and thus same educational access, in English.

Chicago Public Schools JUST fixed this, finally allowing our emergent bilingual students the chance to show off their abilities, and denies them equal access to the educational resources in our district. The decision to revert to an English-only test is based on flawed analysis of test scores that compare two totally different groups, and represent a disconnect with multifaceted ways that multilingual learners in our district show-off their excellence.

It is not too late for an alternative testing plan to be made for students who choose to test in a language besides English. I urge the board to push CPS to begin making these arrangements immediately.

- 3 Hello,
To the Members of the Board of Education,
My name is Tatianna Christmas. I am 22 years old, born and raised in Chicago, and I attended Steinmetz College Prep from 2018 to 2022.
When I think back on my time at Steinmetz, I remember more than just the memories I made with friends. I remember the teachers who believed in me, challenged me, and helped shape the person I am today. I was not always the easiest student. I struggled through difficult periods in my life, and there were times when I was disrespectful or even skipped class. Despite that, one teacher never gave up on me: my social studies and history teacher, whom we all called Mr. P.
I had Mr. P every year I attended Steinmetz. His class was not easy, nor was it a place where students could simply waste time. He challenged us to think critically, ask questions, and understand history from multiple perspectives. He encouraged us to use our minds in meaningful ways and taught us lessons that extended far beyond a textbook.
As an Afro-Latino student, learning about history and ethnic studies gave me a greater understanding of myself, my community, and the experiences of others. Mr. P created an environment where every student felt encouraged to learn, think independently, and grow. His influence reached far beyond academics. He helped build confidence, character, and critical thinking skills in countless students, including me. I can honestly say he played a significant role in shaping the person I am today.
It was deeply disappointing to learn that the Ethnic Studies and Dual Credit course has been canceled and that Mr. P, along with other dedicated teachers, has been laid off. These classes are more than electives. They provide students with opportunities to earn college credit, understand



diverse histories and cultures, and develop the critical thinking skills necessary to become informed, responsible citizens.

Steinmetz serves a diverse student population, including many Black, Latino, and students from other cultural backgrounds. Courses like these help students feel represented while also teaching empathy, respect, and a deeper understanding of the world around them. They prepare young people not only for college but for life.

Teachers like Mr. P dedicate their time, energy, and hearts to educating the next generation. Their impact cannot always be measured by test scores or budgets. It is measured by the lives they change, the confidence they build, and the futures they help create.

I respectfully ask the Board to reconsider the decision to eliminate these classes and to do everything possible to retain educators like Mr. P. Students deserve teachers who inspire them to think critically, care about their communities, and believe in themselves. Losing teachers like him is a loss not only for Steinmetz but for every student whose life could have been changed by walking into his classroom.

Thank you for taking the time to read my statement and for considering the voices of the students whose lives have been positively impacted by these educators.

Sincerely,
Tatianna Christmas
Steinmetz College Prep, Class of 2022

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|---|--|
| 4 | Mass layoffs of educators is not going to help Chicago students thrive. I implore you NOT to pass this budget, and reconsider cuts to Performing Arts and other enrichment programs. We have seen it build confidence, teach our child to work as part of an ensemble, and learn new ways to express themselves physically, vocally, and emotionally. We hope there is a way to balance the budget without eliminating this value element of our children's education. |
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****ATTACHMENTS****

Dr. Angel Alvarez CPS Board of Education Written Public Comments 7/30/2026

Dear CEO/Superintendent King and CPS Board Members,

I am writing as a longtime CPS parent, alumnus, and community advocate to reiterate concerns about CPS's finances that I and others have been raising for years. The extent of the layoffs being proposed and cost-cutting measures should have been released long ago because these problems were known long ago. This was foreseeable and was foreseen.

The State and the City should absolutely do more to support out children. The city hurts CPS by withholding funding from TIFs and failing to provide property tax revenue to the district in a timely manner, forcing the reliance on short-term tax anticipation notes and other debt financing.

We need school-level budget data. The numbers that tell parents, teachers, and Local School Councils how cuts will actually impact our students needs to be shared in advance. This allows citizens to mobilize and empowers LSCs to be forward thinking in their planning on how to best support their students.

I have shared my analysis that CPS's budget hurts Latino students and the reporting confirms that cuts will fall disproportionately on schools that serve Latino students. CPS's funding formulas that appear neutral on paper can produce sharply unequal outcomes on the ground, particularly for Latino, immigrant, and other historically under-resourced communities. This year's data confirms it in stark terms.

I recognize the position the Board was in this week, caught between real harm to classrooms on one side and real fiscal risk on the other. But that is precisely the position that years of warnings, from me and from many others across this district, were meant to help CPS avoid. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns further, and I will continue to raise them, as I have for years, until CPS's budget practices reflect the sustainability, transparency, and equity our students deserve.

Sincerely,

Dr. Angel Alvarez

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.

FORMAL COMPLAINT

TO: [REDACTED] Secretary to the Board of Education

VIA EMAIL: [REDACTED]

DATE: July 21, 2026

RE: Statutory Non-Compliance, Failure to Organize, and Breach of Public Trust by Steinmetz College Prep High School LSC (Network 14)

1. STATEMENT OF FACT: STATUTORY VIOLATION

Per the official *Chicago Public Schools LSC Reference Guide*, all local school councils are legally mandated to host their mandatory **Organizational Meeting between July 1st and July 14th**. The purpose of this window is to ensure democratic continuity, seat newly elected members, and establish the governance calendar for the fiscal school year. As of today, July 21, 2026, the Steinmetz College Prep LSC has **failed to host or publicly notice this required meeting**. This establishes a deliberate, repeating pattern of non-compliance, following the previous school year where the organizational assembly was unlawfully delayed until January 14, 2026 (Meeting Agenda/Notice and Minutes Attached)

2. DELIBERATE AVOIDANCE OF PUBLIC INQUIRY

Formal notifications detailing this statutory breach were dispatched to Steinmetz Principal **Anna Vilchez**, CPS LSC Director **Kishasha Williams-Ford**, and CPS Network 14/Steinmetz LSC Facilitator **Veronica Derden-Jackson**.

- Principal Anna Vilchez replied in writing confirming she was "in receipt" of my complaint.
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- Immediate subsequent follow-ups requesting the legally required meeting date were met with total silence.
 - Director Kishasha Williams-Ford and Steinmetz LSC Facilitator Veronica Derden-Jackson have continually refused to engage or respond to written community documentation.

3. LEGAL HARM AND COMPLIANCE INFRACTION

By refusing to meet and blocking community outreach, the active administration of the Steinmetz LSC is operating without legal authorization for the current term. They are violating the **Illinois School Code** and executing a soft block on transparency. This prevents public oversight of school discretionary spending and vendor contract reviews.

4. REQUESTED ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

I formally request that the Secretary to the Board of Education immediately initiate the following procedures under Board oversight:

- **Intervention:** Direct the CPS Office of Local School Council Relations to issue an emergency mandate ordering Principal Vilchez to post public notice for an organizational meeting within 48 hours.
- **Investigation:** Initiate an official compliance review into Network 14 management for administrative non-feasance and failure to police known statutory violations within their district.
- **Record Logging:** Enter this formal grievance explicitly into the Board's official correspondence log for the upcoming July 30, 2026, public session.

Respectfully Submitted,

Walter Brzeski

Community Member

SY26 ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA

Steinmetz College Prep High School Local School Council

3030 N Mobile Ave

Room 128 Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at 5:30 PM

meet.google.com/wgb-pfof-xoe

Join by phone

(US) +1 540-680-4363 PIN: 115 481 810#

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|----|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. | Call Meeting to Order | Principal/Formal Chairperson |
| 2. | Roll Call / Establish Quorum | Principal/Formal Chairperson |
| 3. | Selection of Temporary Chairperson | Principal/Formal Chairperson |

Note: At this point, the Temporary Chairperson presides at a meeting until the selection of the permanent Chairperson

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| 4. | Selection of Temporary Secretary | Temporary Chairperson |
| 5. | Approval of Agenda | Temporary Chairperson |
| 6. | Motion(s) and Selection of New Members
-Two Parent Vacancies | Temporary Chairperson |
| 7. | Motion and Selection of Chairperson | Temporary Chairperson |

Note: At this point, the newly-elected Chairperson presides at the meeting and assumes his/her new Duties.

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| 8. | Motion and Selection of the Secretary | Newly Elected Chairperson |
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Note: At this point, the newly-elected Secretary assumes responsibility for taking the minutes of the meeting.

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| 9. | Motion and Selection of the Vice-Chair | Newly Elected Chairperson |
| 10. | Motion(s) and Selection of FOIA/OMA
Officer(s) | Newly Elected Chairperson |
| 11. | Set Regular Meetings Schedule for School Year | Newly Elected Chairperson |
| 12. | Adopt / Re-adopt Bylaws or Establish | Newly Elected Chairperson |
| 13. | Adopt / Re-adopt Rules of Order for LSC Meetings | Newly Elected Chairperson |
| 14. | Announce Date of First Regular Meeting | Newly Elected Chairperson |
| 15. | Public Participation | Newly Elected Chairperson |
| 16. | Adjournment | Newly Elected Chairperson |

SY26 AVISO Y ORDEN DEL DÍA DE LA REUNIÓN ANUAL DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN

**Escuela Preparatoria Steinmetz Consejo Escolar Local
3030 N Mobile Ave
Sala 128, Miércoles 14 de enero de 2026 a las 5:30 horas
meet.google.com/wgb-pfof-xoe
Únete por teléfono
(EE. UU.) +1 540-680-4363 PIN: 115 481 810#**

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------|
| 1. | Llamada a la reunión para comenzar | Director/Expresidente |
| 2. | Lista de asistencia / Establecer quórum | Director/Expresidente |
| 3. | Selección de Presidente Temporalmente | Director/Expresidente |

Nota: En este punto, la Presidenta Provisional preside en la reunión hasta la Selección del presidente permanente

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| 4. | Selección de Secretario Temporal | Presidente provisional |
| 5. | Aprobación del orden del día | Presidente provisional |
| 6. | Moción(es) y Selección de Nuevos Miembros
-Dos vacancias de padres | Presidenta recién elegida |
| 7. | Movimiento y Selección del Presidente | Presidente provisional |

Nota: En este punto, la presidenta recién elegida preside en la reunión y asume sus nuevas responsabilidades.

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| 8. | Movimiento y Selección del Secretario | Presidenta recién elegida |
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Nota: En este punto, el Secretario recién elegido asume la responsabilidad de redactar el acta de la reunión.

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| 9. | Movimiento y Selección del Vicepresidente | Presidenta recién elegida |
| 10. | Movimiento(s) y la selección de FOIA/OMA
Oficial(es) | Presidenta recién elegida |
| 11. | Establecer un calendario de reuniones regulares
para el año escolar | Presidenta recién elegida |
| 12. | Adoptar/Readoptar Estatutos o Establecer | Presidenta recién elegida |
| 13. | Aprobar/reaprobar el Reglamento de las reuniones del LSC | Presidenta recién elegida |
| 14. | Anunciar la fecha de la primera reunión ordinaria | Presidenta recién elegida |
| 15. | Participación pública | Presidenta recién elegida |

16. Aplazamiento

Presidenta recién elegida

LSC Organizational Meeting Minutes - January 14, 2026

The **January 14, 2026**, organizational meeting of the Steinmetz Local School Council was called to order by the principal, Dr. Anna Vilchez, at 5:41 pm. A quorum was present.

Members in attendance: Dr. Anna Vilchez, Ms. Vanessa Valentin, Ms. Cecilia Guadalupe, Ms. Cassandra Hernandez, Mr. Angel DeJesus, Ms. Tara Dunne, Mr. Vince Caputi, Mia Arroyo, Kelly Heredia

Members absent: Mr. Jose Quiles, Camila Garcia Rodriguez, Ms. Lourdes Gonzalez, Ms. Lilibeth Munoz

This meeting was the Annual Organizational Meeting to select temporary roles, such as Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary for the duration of at least one session, after which these roles will be filled permanently.

1. Dr. Vilchez made a motion to select Ms. Cecilia Guadalupe as temporary chairperson. Ms. Dunne seconded the motion. 9 yes, 0 no, motion passes.
2. A motion was made by Ms. Dunne to nominate Mr. Caputi for temporary secretary. Ms. Guadalupe seconded the motion. 9 yes, 0 no, motion passes.
3. A motion was made by Ms. Guadalupe and seconded by Ms. Valentin to approve the agenda. 9 yes, 0 no, motion passes.
4. Ms. Guadalupe makes a motion to approve an application for Alex Vallejo to be a new parent member of the LSC. Ms. Valentin seconds the motion. Ms. Dunne asks to see the application; she receives and reviews the application. Mr. Vallejo says his daughter is a freshman at Steinmetz, it is an honor to share this table, and he is here to learn and to help. 9 yes, 0 no, motion passes. Ms. Guadalupe mentions that there is one parent vacancy still open; we have received an application from a parent, but she is not present at the current meeting.
5. Ms. Valentin nominates Ms. Guadalupe to be Chairperson; Ms. Hernandez seconds the nomination. 10 yes, 0 no, motion passes.
6. Ms. Dunne nominates Mr. Caputi to be secretary; Mr. Vallejo seconds the motion. 2 yes, 8 abstain, motion does not pass.
7. Ms. Valentin nominates Ms. Dunne to be secretary; Ms. Guadalupe seconds the motion. Ms. Dunne declines the nomination. The possibility of Dr. Vilchez being the secretary is raised; it is something to be looked into with LSC Relations. Ms. Guadalupe calls for a vote for Dr. Vilchez to be secretary in the meantime. 1 yes, 9 abstain, motion does not pass.
8. Ms. Guadalupe makes a motion to have Ms. Dunne as temporary secretary; Dr. Vilchez seconds the motion. Ms. Dunne agrees to be secretary for this meeting and will think about whether she wants to be permanent secretary up to the next meeting. 10 yes, 0 no, motion passes.

9. Dr. Vilchez nominates Ms. Valentin to be Vice-Chair; Kelly Heredia seconds the motion. 9 yes, 1 abstention, motion passes.
10. Dr. Vilchez motions to table the vote for a FOIA/OMA officer until the current officer, Mr. Quiles, is present; Ms. Valentin seconds the motion. 10 yes, 0 no, motion passes.
11. Ms. Guadalupe makes a motion to set the meeting date as the second Wednesday of each month at 5:30 pm; Ms. Valentin seconds the motion. 10 yes, 0 no, motion passes.
12. Ms. Guadalupe makes a motion to re-adopt the bylaws; Dr. Vilchez seconds the motion. 8 yes, 2 abstained, motion passes.
13. Ms. Guadalupe introduces the topic of rules and regulations (i.e. Robert's Rules) for meetings. Ms. Valentin says that due to past issues, we should table this discussion for later when we can have a fuller discussion. The idea of having a sergeant of arms present to help keep order is brought up. Ms. Guadalupe makes a motion to table re-adoption rules of order (Robert's Rules); Dr. Vilchez seconds the motion. 10 yes, 0 no, motion passes.
14. Ms. Guadalupe announces the date of the next regular meeting: February 11, 5:30 pm.
15. There was public participation.
16. Ms. Guadalupe makes a motion to adjourn the meeting; Dr. Vilchez seconds the motion. 10 yes, 0 no, motion passes.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 pm.

The next regular meeting will be on February 11, 2026, at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tara Dunne

From: Darlene O'Banner [REDACTED]
Date: July 27, 2026 at 2:43:59 PM CDT
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: The Englewood community

Date: July 27, 2026

To: Members of the Chicago Board of Education

Subject: Urgent Request to Approve the CPS School Budget for 2026–2027

Dear Board Members,

My name is Darlene O'Banner, and I have been a proud resident and advocate in the Englewood community for over 50 years. Over these five decades, I have seen our neighborhood go through many changes, but one thing has always remained clear: the heart of Englewood is our children and their future.

I am writing to urge you to vote YES to approve the Chicago Public Schools budget for the 2026–2027 school year.

I understand and acknowledge that CPS is facing significant financial deficits and hard decisions. However, we cannot allow budget disputes to stand in the way of our children's education. Passing this budget is critical so that our schools have the resources they need to open their doors on time and welcome our students back to a safe, supportive learning environment.

Our young people in Englewood and across Chicago deserve stability, quality education, and the opportunity to thrive. Please vote yes to approve the budget so our children can return to school without delay.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and commitment to our students.

Sincerely,

Darlene O'Banner

Englewood Resident & Community Member