

**December 3, 2025, Agenda Review Committee Meeting Written Comments
Received between Monday, December 1st and Thursday, December 4th Submitted
via Written Comments Form**

1	<p>While I acknowledge that CPS has not granted our co-location request, I am disappointed by this decision as our request offered a solution that was community-determined, child-centered, and put students first. As the parent of a Haugan preschooler, I see firsthand the issues that overcrowding has created. I also see the enormous current successes of Haugan staff and students despite these challenges. As a result, the school has become a desirable academic option for parents across our district.</p> <p>In making your decision, you stated that you considered “enrollment patterns”. I would like to challenge your analysis of these as being focused on historical data. Multiple growth factors, especially the school’s added dual-language status, were not accounted for in historical considerations. Future statistical enrollment projections should fuel the urgency and validity of our request.</p> <p>Additionally, our most vulnerable populations were not wisely taken into account. Your denial leaves Haugan in an untenable position without private, confidential spaces for our counseling and social work teams, a library that must share space with other departments, and a lack of permanent space for our specialized classes. An overcrowded space impacts learning across grades, but especially for our most vulnerable students with disabilities and our youngest preschool students.</p> <p>However, I want to be very clear that these are the very students we need to keep central to the mission of our school and therefore, I reject any future proposals that would displace them to another building. Our cohesive student body is made best when all members are physically, mentally, and emotionally cared for. Your denial creates an unsupported vision of the flourishing of all our students.</p> <p>Having rejected our proposal, I want to see CPS provide a solution to our overcrowding before next year.</p> <p>We must have dedicated instructional environments for core and specialty departments that will support our transition to a dual language school. Our school body should remain unified, keeping our preschool students and students with disabilities in the same building.</p> <p>And the school that sits one block away, they will see their full potential fulfilled when they embrace educational spaces that are utilized for the full benefit of all children in our community. This is what you had the opportunity to invite North River into. This is what I hope you will work toward.</p>
2	<p>For sixteen years I taught in the Chicago Catholic schools. I took a break after my son was born, and when he turned four we had a choice: send him to a Catholic school, or try our neighborhood public school. We chose to send him to Haugan.</p> <p>Three months later, I understand why my neighbors and friends who have the money and ability to investigate alternatives choose to send their children to private or Catholic schools. I understand why my friends buy a house in the suburbs rather than the city.</p> <p>It isn’t because Haugan’s teachers and staff are inexperienced or unqualified or don’t care. Far from it. The school is full of educators who will literally walk an extra mile to escort a child home because their parent is too scared to leave the house.</p> <p>But the conditions that these teachers and students have been forced to endure, for decades now, are unacceptable. Next year my child will be in kindergarten. There are currently two kindergarten classes of 30 students. CPS has provided money for an additional teacher to create a third class, but there is no empty room anywhere in the school for a new classroom. Art is already on a cart. There is no science lab. The library has already been turned into a makeshift</p>

classroom, tech repair center, and a warren of offices and counseling corners. Of course, the school could put a dance teacher on a cart. But trying to hold a dance class in a classroom where children have to navigate around furniture and each other is a great premise for a comedy sketch but in the real world would place students at real risk of injury.

This school board has said it believes in and supports neighborhood schools. My question to you is: Which neighborhood schools? Waters, to the east of us, had an annex completed in 2021. Sauganash, just to the northwest of us, built an addition in 2011 and has a beautiful new annex that opened in 2023. Oh, CPS did build a lovely middle school for Haugan in 2005! But you promptly gave it to a charter school, which has since failed and closed.

What do Lincoln Park and Sauganash have that Haugan doesn't? They have a large number of families who are predominantly white, educated, upper middle class professionals.

With our proposal to co-locate to utilize some of the vacant space in that building having been denied without explanation by the CPS portfolio team, we are left in the same position we were in twenty years ago: conjuring space out of thin air, making do with a building that had its last addition and major renovation in 1924 and contenting ourselves vague promises of support in better utilizing our existing space.

Enough! The way Haugan has been ignored, overlooked, and talked down to is systemically, institutionally racist. For decades CPS actions have been shouting that Haugan's community of largely Hispanic, Spanish-speaking families are second-class citizens who do not deserve the same treatment as their wealthier white neighbors.

We are here today to speak on their behalf and demand action.

What solution will you provide to Haugan's overcrowding? Will you encourage selective enrollment schools to expand and siphon off some of the families who have the resources to navigate the complexities of that system? Will you fiddle with attendance boundaries to pull students and families away from the school community they love?

Or will you say, "Enough is enough. We acknowledge that we have made mistakes and hurt this community. These children deserve our support. We will provide this school with the space they need to thrive."

You have a chance to change the narrative. Will you?

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- 3 Growing up in a disinvested community in Minneapolis, MN, I went to an elementary school that was overcrowded. We trudged outside to drafty old trailers for art class and held counseling sessions in broom closets. Eventually, I benefitted from the decision to colocate a sparsely attended magnet school with my regular elementary school. It made my school experience richer, and granted access to more opportunities. It also impressed upon me that adults cared about my educational experience, and caused me to seek out similar environments in high school, college and grad school. Because some thoughtful people acknowledged that I was worthy, I could see that my education was worth advocating for personally.

I write to you today to try to do the same for the students of Haugan Elementary School. I don't have any children of my own, but as a homeowner in South Albany Park, I see the two schools and their students in my neighborhood every day. I also see the overcrowding — and heroic efforts of parents, teachers, aides and students to ameliorate them — firsthand as a volunteer at Haugan.

When I heard that CPS denied the recent co-location request, I was shocked. The proposal read to me as a community-determined, child-centered solution to an all-to-common problem. Haugan's dual-language status, counseling and social work needs, and specialized classes

	<p>deserve physical space to complement the amazing level of care and work that go into offering them to students in need.</p> <p>CPS must provide a solution to overcrowding at Haugan — before next year — that provides dedicated instructional environments for core and specialty departments that will support the transition to a dual-language school. The school community must remain unified, with preschool students and students with disabilities in the same building. The idea that a state-of-the-art, half-empty school sits one block away is a travesty and embarrassment to me as a community member and school volunteer.</p> <p>In a time when those who need the most are being told by adults on the national level that they are nothing, it is well past time for CPS to do the right thing for our community.</p>
4	<p>Haugn School needs more space! Please budget money for a new addition/school.</p>
5	<p>Please think of the children first. Think with your heart, not your mind. Open doors and pathways for them. They are our future and all children deserve to be treated equally. There is a half empty school a block a way from Haugan that could be utilized by current Haugan students. If not that building, I hope you come up with another solution before the end of the year.</p>
6	<p>Please grant additional space to our community's Haugan School swiftly, in this time when we must support our youngest against the siege on families!</p>
7	<p>While I acknowledge that CPS has not granted our co-location request, I am disappointed by this decision as our request offered a solution that was community-determined, child-centered, and put students first. As the parent/community member, I see firsthand the issues that overcrowding has created. I also see the enormous current successes of Haugan staff and students despite these challenges. As a result, the school has become a desirable academic option for parents across our district.</p> <p>In making your decision, you stated that you considered "enrollment patterns". I would like to challenge your analysis of these as being focused on historical data. Multiple growth factors, especially the school's added dual-language status, were not accounted for in historical considerations. Future statistical enrollment projections should fuel the urgency and validity of our request.</p> <p>Additionally, our most vulnerable populations were not wisely taken into account. Your denial leaves Haugan in an untenable position without private, confidential spaces for our counseling and social work teams, a library that must share space with other departments, and a lack of permanent space for our specialized classes. An overcrowded space impacts learning across grades, but especially for our most vulnerable students with disabilities and our youngest preschool students.</p> <p>However, I want to be very clear that these are the very students we need to keep central to the mission of our school and therefore, I reject any future proposals that would displace them to another building. Our cohesive student body is made best when all members are physically, mentally, and emotionally cared for. Your denial creates an unsupported vision of the flourishing of all our students.</p> <p>Having rejected our proposal, I want to see CPS provide a solution to our overcrowding before next year.</p> <p>We must have dedicated instructional environments for core and specialty departments that will support our transition to a dual language school. Our school body should remain unified, keeping our preschool students and students with disabilities in the same building.</p> <p>And the school that sits one block away, they will see their full potential fulfilled when they embrace educational spaces that are utilized for the full benefit of all children in our community. This is what you had the opportunity to invite North River into. This is what I hope you will work toward.</p>
8	<p>Hello. I'm submitting a written objection to the recent decision that denied Haugan Elementary's request to co-locate at the nearby Aspira/North River building.</p> <p>My son is currently enrolled in kindergarten at Haugan and my husband and I have witnessed first hand (and have also heard testimonials from many of the teachers there) the desperate need for</p>

more space to help facilitate a proper educational environment. I was personally at the meeting where the colocation was discussed and examples that the teachers gave about space were heartbreaking. One teacher stated that she teaches special needs children out of a closet which not only distracts her students but the others students that are connected to that classroom. Another teacher spoke to the fact that when kids are allowed a quiet space to take a test, the only space they have to do this is a hallway. Its obvious that there are needs of children that are not being met at the current facility.

For your reference, below is a list of Non-Negotiable Demands for Space & Facilities that the Haugan community at large has mutually agreed upon. Thank you for your reconsideration of this matter.

Haugan Community: Non-Negotiable Demands for Space & Facilities

To ensure equitable education and the continued success of the Haugan community, the following requirements are non-negotiable in any proposal to resolve current space and overcrowding concerns.

1. Holistic Community Integrity

We demand that the Haugan student body remains unified as a single cohort throughout their academic career.

- No Displacement: We reject any solution that requires splintering our community by moving specific grades or populations to off-site locations or annexes.
- Inclusive Continuity: This demand explicitly includes our Students with Disabilities and Early Childhood/Pre-K learners. These populations are integral to our school culture and must not be segregated or displaced.
- Educational Stability: All students deserve the stability of remaining in one supportive community environment from their first day until graduation/promotion, without the disruption of transferring facilities.

2. Dedicated Instructional & Support Environments

We demand fully functional, separate, and dedicated spaces for all core and specialty departments.

- Specialized Classrooms: We require permanent, dedicated spaces for Art and Science. "Classroom on a cart" or sharing general education rooms is not an acceptable solution for these subjects.
- Library Media Center: A fully functioning library is essential for literacy and research; it must be a dedicated space, not a shared multi-purpose room.
- Student Support Services: We mandate private, dedicated, and confidential spaces for Counseling and Social Work. Mental health support cannot be conducted in hallways, closets, or partitioned corners of shared offices.

3. Infrastructure for Dual Language Success/ Strategic & Accurate Enrollment Forecasting

We demand that all space planning explicitly supports our transition toward becoming a Dual Language school. We demand that enrollment projections used for decision-making reflect the reality of Dual Language attraction.

- Programmatic Support: Solutions must provide the physical infrastructure necessary to support the unique scheduling and resource needs of a robust Dual Language curriculum.

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- Growth Factor: Decision-makers must not rely solely on historical enrollment data. Projections must factor in the statistically expected increase in enrollment that accompanies the designation of Dual Language status.
- Future-Proofing: Capacity planning must account for this influx of new families to ensure

	we do not immediately face overcrowding again once the Dual Language program launches.
9	<p>I am a Haugan parent who attended the in-person gathering about co-location at Haugan this fall. I was very surprised and saddened to learn that the CPS CEO was not even going to present the option of co-location to the Board, without providing reasoning as to why besides the "thorough analysis" completed. Listening to the needs of teachers and parents at Haugan made it seem very clear that there is a need for more space at Haugan. The enrollment numbers at North River did not seem to show as strong as a need. It makes me wonder: is there some other dynamic occurring? This decision does not seem entirely un-biased, and it feels like there is already some other pre-determined plan for the open space at North River. But what need could that be, besides the families that live in this neighborhood, who send their children to Haugan? I strongly recommend that you reconsider and put forth the proposed co-location to the Board so that they can review the analysis directly. In addition, I would recommend including some voices of Haugan and North River directly as this decision by the CEO does not imbibe confidence if they were to present the findings directly to the Board.</p>
10	<p>As a parent of a Haugan student and a resident of the Albany Park neighborhood, I am incredibly disappointed by the portfolio management office's decision to deny our request to co-locate at the Aspira/North River building.</p> <p>Our request offered a solution that was community-determined, child-centered, and put students first.</p> <p>With this denial, I feel that our most vulnerable populations were not wisely taken into account. Your denial leaves Haugan in an untenable position without private, confidential spaces for our counseling and social work teams, a library that must share space with other departments, and a lack of permanent space for our specialized classes. An overcrowded space impacts learning across grades, but especially for our most vulnerable students with disabilities and our youngest preschool students.</p> <p>However, I want to be very clear that these are the very students we need to keep central to the mission of our school and therefore, I reject any future proposals that would displace them to another building. Our cohesive student body is made best when all members are physically, mentally, and emotionally cared for. Your denial creates an unsupported vision of the flourishing of all our students.</p> <p>Having rejected our proposal, I want to see CPS provide a solution to our overcrowding before next year.</p> <p>We must have dedicated instructional environments for core and specialty departments that will support our transition to a dual language school. Our school body should remain unified, keeping our preschool students and students with disabilities in the same building.</p> <p>The Aspira/North River building is a half-empty school that sits one block away and is the perfect solution for our overcrowding issues. Co-locating with that space will allow our seventh and eighth grade students to see their full potential realized, and would fully utilize a building with adequate educational spaces—providing a benefit to all children in our community. They would remain Hauganites, and work collaboratively with North River's community. If the last few months in Chicago have taught us anything, it's that the Albany Park community is strong and dedicated to working with one another. This is what I hope you will work toward.</p>

11	<p>As a parent of a child at Haugan Elementary, our neighborhood school, I am disappointed by the office of portfolio management's denial of our community's request for Haugan to colocate with nearby North Park Elementary. Haugan's enrollment has been growing and the school's capacity is strained, for example lacking dedicated rooms for counseling and some specials. I believe it is untenable and unacceptable to fail to provide our neighborhood schools, and the students in them, with the space and resources they need to thrive: Neighborhood schools like Haugan serve everyone in the community, and in addition to providing our children's educations, they help strengthen our communities in ways that regional/magnet schools cannot. Given North Park's proximity to Haugan and its unused space, I think our colocation request was a reasonable and practical solution for Haugan's space needs. Whether CPS proceeds with this particular solution, or a different solution to provide for the needs of our neighborhood school, the students in it, and the community around it, I do expect it to fully support those needs.</p>
12	<p>Good morning everyone. My name is MyleeneElyse Marrero, and I am an Alumni from Aspira Business and Finance High School, Pioneer Class of 2019. To many in the community, Aspira is more than just a high school, it is a second home, and a safe place for whoever steps inside. This topic of discussion is extremely important to me, as aspiras faculty, staff, and students seen me through many phases in my life.</p> <p>When I started at ABF, my family and I were homeless. My mom was trying her best to find us stable housing, and all she wanted was for her kids to go to and finish high school. She decided on ABF because I was previously a AHMS student, and she remembered "Once an Aspirante, Always an Aspirante". She walked in, explained our situation, and we were met with genuine concern and compassion. I was enrolled to start the following Monday. My teachers knew that we were facing many insecurities but still treated me like the rest of the students. I was provided ventra vouchers to get to and from school safely, I met weekly with the school counselor, and I was finally in a place where I genuinely felt safe. Aspira provided me school clothing as well as a winter coat and boots that I used well into my junior year of high school.</p> <p>Aspira has a staff that is caring, observant, and compassionate. Each and every one of the teachers I have had made an impact in my life in one way or another. Since the pioneer class, many of our teachers moved up with us in grade, from freshman to senior year. Each year came with new lessons, trials, and memories. My teachers from Aspira are the reason why I am currently pursuing a degree in secondary education. The way they cared for their students is what made me realize that I can also make a significant and positive impact in my students lives.</p> <p>If you close Aspira or decide to not provide funding, we would be losing a pillar of our community, a center of education that is much needed with the principles that they provide. Aspira Business and Finance teaches students the fundamentals of business education, financial literacy, and a general education. Aspira Early College provides AP and Dual enrollment to receive college credit while in high school. Closing these schools would do more harm for the community than good. So I ask to please consider this judgement and take into consideration of my personal encounter with Aspira and to investigate the mismanagement of funds made by the CEO. Thank you for your time.</p>
13	<p>I am writing regarding the recent decision to deny Haugan Elementary the opportunity to expand into the third floor of the former "Aspira" building. I am deeply concerned about the impact this decision will have on our school community, specifically on our special education and pre-K students who may now be displaced as a result. It is disheartening to see a strong, established community potentially broken apart.</p> <p>This issue is personal to me on multiple levels. I am not only an educator at Haugan and a community member, but also a former Haugan student. I was part of the first group of students who transitioned into the Aspira building to complete 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. I vividly remember when that building was expected to become Haugan Middle School, only for it to be turned into Aspira instead. It is unbelievable that, years later, we find ourselves facing a similar situation.</p>

While it appears that Haugan has not been officially labeled as overcrowded, the reality inside our building tells a very different story. We do not have a library. We do not have a computer lab. Our art teacher is a traveling teacher who pushes a cart from room to room. Many of our administrative and support staff share a single cramped space. And transitions in the hallways, especially with our growing student population are extremely challenging. To say we are short on space is an understatement.

History may repeat itself, but the needs of our students remain real and urgent. If Haugan is once again in need of space, what does this decision mean for the future of our neighborhood school? Haugan is not a lottery-based school; it serves families within the immediate community. Empty space within the building should be used to support neighborhood students, not allocated in ways that exclude them.

The other school currently in the former "Aspira" building is lottery-based, which makes this decision even more troubling. This means that students who live within walking distance, students who belong to this community, could be denied access to both Haugan and the school occupying that space.

My question is simple: What happens now? Will neighborhood students be turned away because Haugan no longer has the space they need? And if they are not chosen by lottery at the other school, does that mean our community's children will be left without an accessible option in the very building located at the heart of their neighborhood?

I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider the long-term impact of this decision. Our community deserves stability, accessibility, and equitable use of neighborhood space. Our students deserve to remain together in the school that has always served them.

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- 14 I am a parent of a kindergarten student at Haugan elementary. I've been extremely concerned about the amount of students in my daughter's class. We have such limited space in the building, so there's no opportunity to split the kindergartens into smaller class sizes. Young children need space to move around and learn in hands-on ways. The teacher is very limited when the class sizes are so large. Just adding more adults to the room only further limit the space. This problem is not only evident in kindergarten at Haugan, but we have many classrooms that have too many students for the space available. Not to mention we also have multiple clinicians and office staff working in one room. These overcrowded conditions are not conducive for learning. On top of that, we would like to be able to have counselors have private meetings with students in need. People need to be able to do their work with adequate space. Please help us solve Haugan's space issues as we are working diligently to become a better school and need the support.
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- 15 To whom it may concern:

My name is Zach. My daughter is eight years old and has been at Haugan since preschool. Every single morning, she walks into school and greets her preschool teacher because the continuity of care, the relationships, and the community built here by Principal Yutzy and the incredible staff have shaped her life. But that community is being strangled by overcrowding. We have teachers providing IEP services in hallways, closets converted into classrooms, administrators giving up their offices for social services. This building is maxed out. Not because of mismanagement, but because Haugan is out of space. This isn't just unacceptable, it's disgraceful.

And now, there is a proposal on the table that openly considers removing dedicated rooms for art, music, STEM, specials classes; relocating or eliminating preschool programming - a 15 year pillar of Haugan Elementary and Albany Park; turning shared general-purpose or ad-hoc rooms into standard classrooms just to handle more bodies. Let me be clear: that solution is not just inadequate, it's cowardly, shortsighted, and cruel to the students and families who rely on this school. Anyone who genuinely believes this asinine solution is a better one needs to check their motives and ask themselves whether they are here to serve students or to preserve the comfort of the adults in the system.

Meanwhile, Aspira Haugan, a purpose-built junior high, sits massively under-utilized. This building was designed for middle school students. It has the capacity, the infrastructure, the science labs, and the specialty rooms that Haugan's upper grades simply do not have here. North River has little to no waitlist anyway and they won't fill close to capacity. The idea that "sharing resources" between two schools in one building is too complicated is insulting. Schools share resources all the time. Administrators already coordinate schedules, rooms, and services. Pretending that two schools cannot function under one roof is not a real concern, it is an excuse. To deny Haugan's 7th–8th graders access to a modern building that was built for them while forcing them to squeeze into a structure never meant for adolescents is backwards and it's harmful.

I grew up in Highland Park. I had modern schools with modern infrastructure. I have lived in Albany Park since my daughter was born. My wife and I are preparing to buy a home, but I won't consider a location where my daughter suffers by proxy. While I have the privilege of leaving Chicago if I need to ensure my daughter gets the education she deserves, most families in Albany Park do not have that privilege. But their children deserve the same quality of facilities that wealthier neighborhoods take for granted. They deserve lockers, support, dignity, and safety just the same as the elementary students at Haugan do. They learned this may be an option and wrote essays describing their exuberance only for them to be called fake and become disappointed.

Aspira Haugan was never meant to be a lottery school.
It was built to serve Haugan.
It was built to serve Albany Park.

Denying this proposal does not protect students, it punishes them. Our families trust CPS to make decisions that lift their children up not hold them back. You are stealing opportunities from children you serve, you are erasing programs, you are denying our dignity and safety, and you are sending a clear message that CPS is willing to let overcrowded kids "make do" in closets while a modern building sits half-empty down the street.

16 Dear Members of the Chicago Board of Education,

We are asking for your support in keeping the preschool program at Haugan School. Our fully enrolled, vibrant preschool provides an essential service to neighborhood families and offers children the stability, early learning foundation, and social-emotional support they need to thrive.

Closing this program would deeply affect the many families who rely on accessible early childhood education within their community. Haugan preschoolers often continue through the grades with us, and families choose Haugan because of the caring relationships and continuity we provide.

Our team is committed to high-quality instruction, strong family partnership, and a safe, nurturing environment. We believe this program is a critical resource for our community, and we are ready to collaborate on solutions that allow it to remain at Haugan.

We respectfully request your advocacy to keep the Haugan preschool program in our school and to ensure our youngest learners can begin their education in their neighborhood community.

Thank you for your consideration.

17 As a staff member at Haugan elementary school in Albany park I have been dealing with the overcrowding and the challenges of keeping kids safe when there isn't enough room for them to move about. I am disheartened and disappointed that the request to use the Aspira space for our overwhelming middle school (the increase directly because of the closing of said charter school)

This is the obvious solution. A space that is already designed to serve that population. We do not want out pre k or cluster moved because they provide valuable services to the community.

	For a parent to send their young student to the local school is what every Chicago family wants. I sincerely hope you will reconsider.
18	<p>Dear Chicago Board of Education,</p> <p>The recent increase in charter school closures underscores the urgent need for a universal and transparent transition plan to guide potential charter school closures. While the Board's effort to reduce student instability, such as providing funds to prevent mid-school closures, is much appreciated; responding to each closure individually is not sustainable in the long term.</p> <p>As we have noticed, when charter school operators choose not to renew their contracts or face financial challenges, the board is often left making case by case decisions. Without a consistent framework, these decisions can appear uneven or unfair to the public, which was evident after the decision was made to absorb ChiArts and extend EPIC's contract until the end of the school year.</p> <p>To promote transparency and fairness, I urge the Board to develop a universal transition plan, one that includes clear metrics that guide when to extend contracts, when to absorb schools, and how to transition students and staff after a decision to close a charter has been made. Establishing a Charter Transition Committee, or something of the sort, with key stakeholders would ensure that future closures are handled consistently, proactively, and with students' best interest at heart.</p> <p>With additional charter school closure likely to happen in the upcoming years, preparing a clear and equitable process now will strength stability across the district in the upcoming years.</p>
19	<p>Dear esteemed members of the Board,</p> <p>I am writing today in strong support of the Haugan Elementary School community. I have been a teacher at Haugan for the past 14 years. I have taught every type of model of Pre-K classroom - half day, half day blended, full day, and full day blended. Students from my first year teaching are now in college. I have taught brothers, sisters, cousins, family friends, neighbors, and more. I have supported former students with homebound services during health crises; I have been invited to birthday parties and graduations, and have volunteered at numerous after school festivals and schoolwide events; and I have been on school-based committees. Through participatory budgeting, I helped secure funding for the fence that now surrounds our building and protects our students. Haugan is not only where I work—it is my professional home and the heart of our Albany Park neighborhood.</p> <p>When thousands of families arrived in Chicago in search of safety and stability over the past few years, Haugan embraced them wholeheartedly. Across every grade level, teachers created new labels for desks and cubbies as students arrived and sometimes left suddenly. We met with families outside of school hours, offered resources, and ensured that every child felt a sense of belonging, continuity, and safety. Haugan has been a haven for decades. Many staff members once studied in these same halls; others sent their own children here and volunteered in classrooms until they eventually became teachers themselves. While wearing my Haugan hoodie and running errands around the city, I often hear, "I went to Haugan!" and often followed by a story that reminds me how deeply our school is woven into the fabric of this community, and how far-reaching its impact can be.</p> <p>Because our school community is exceptional, our students deserve an equitable, stable education that reflects the strength and diversity of Albany Park. To protect that future, we have several non-negotiable needs. First, we insist on preserving the integrity of our school community by keeping our entire student body—Pre-K through upper grades—together. No grade bands, populations, or programs should be splintered or relocated to off-site annexes. This includes our Students with Disabilities and our youngest Early Childhood learners, whose presence enriches our entire school culture. Every child deserves to learn and grow within one consistent, supportive environment from their first day to their last. Engaging with former students in the hallway and supporting their growth from afar is a core component of a strong learning environment.</p>

Second, our students must have access to fully dedicated instructional and support spaces. Permanent rooms for Art, Science, and other specialties are essential. Pushing these programs onto carts or into borrowed rooms undermines their quality and status as core subjects, and shortchanges our students. We require a truly functional space for counseling, social work, and special education services to be provided. Confidential environments are an absolute necessity for these services; mental-health support cannot occur in hallways, storage spaces, or corners under stairwells.

Finally, any facility or enrollment planning must align with Haugan's transition to becoming a Dual Language school. Planning must include the infrastructure, scheduling flexibility, and classroom capacity required to launch this program successfully—while also future-proofing our building so that we do not return to overcrowding shortly after implementation.

Haugan has served as a stabilizing force for generations of families. We urge you to honor that legacy by ensuring that our students remain together, fully supported, and equipped with the spaces and resources they deserve. Our community is strong, but it must also be protected.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

****ATTACHMENTS****

My name is Tiffany Harvey and I am a Haugan sixth grade parent and the LSC Chairperson. I am deeply disappointed that on Monday, CPS's Portfolio Office denied our colocation request without explanation or any path forward other than to "work with Haugan to explore solutions to maximize space within its school facility."

Former facilities chief Carmona told us earlier "we are not crowded yet," and, "trends show our enrollment may be stabilizing." But we ARE severely overcrowded. We fully expect our enrollment will trend upwards for several reasons, including the new right to stay policy, strong word of mouth about our school, and our progress toward implementing a dual language program. But even if we do not grow - OUR SITUATION IS UNTENABLE RIGHT NOW.

We have an excellent principal, teachers, and other professionals. ALL SPACE IS BEING MAXIMIZED. No feng shui tips will solve our severe space issue.

Although I am a long term Haugan parent, and you have heard from me several times this year on this issue, I actually had no idea of the severity of our situation until Monday, when I toured our school with Alderwoman Rodriguez and fully realized that within our wonderful, egalitarian school community, and despite the heroic efforts of our phenomenal staff, the crowding creates layers of privilege and that my white, English speaking, general education, non low-income child is harmed far less than many others with much greater need.

On Monday I saw first hand that not only have we lost our library for space reasons but it is now carved up into a maze of 16 small work spaces for staff, counselors, and clinicians who need but do not have space for confidential services, consultations, screenings, health screenings, etc. etc. While we were there, a group of about 8 small boys, receiving a specialized group service, occupied the floor in the narrow walkway between workstations, less than a foot away from a counselor's desk. The conditions are shocking, but are the everyday reality for many of our most vulnerable students and the staff who tirelessly serve them.

And there is a seemingly easy, sensible solution that will instantly relieve the crowding, colocation with North River in the Leland building. Which would give all our learners the space they need and not harm North River.

While North River claims it is also crowded, data from its recent admission cycles show very little demand for its program, few applicants and no waitlist other than for grades PK and K. Critically, **North River, a school with citywide, lottery-based admissions, has full control over its class size and can simply eliminate crowding by not admitting new students outside its entry level grade and by natural attrition. A neighborhood school like Haugan cannot do this and must enroll all comers.**

We have long hoped that if Aspira left and we grew, Haugan could use or share the Leland building which was funded and built for our students. Since Aspira announced its closure, we have pursued colocation vigorously. Unfortunately, we feel that CPS misled us at every step of this process.

First, in 2022, we were told not to object to North River's moving into the Leland building to colocate with Aspira middle school. To stifle objections to the placement of a lottery-based elementary school just two blocks from Haugan, North River promised that it would remain a small school and not occupy additional space, and CPS assured us that the two schools would collaborate later if we grew as projected. Since then, Haugan has absorbed and retained over 200 migrant children yet our severe, present need to use vacant space in the Leland building is being disregarded. We have tried to engage with North River for a full year but have yet to meet with them and CPS has done nothing to facilitate let alone assure the promised collaboration.

Next, when Aspira announced its closure almost a year ago, CPS advised us it was too early to request to use the space they vacated. We did so anyway and CPS then responded that it was too late for this school year. Over the summer we attempted to survey both our school community and the larger Albany Park community about potential uses for the vacant space and were directed NOT to survey the community, we were told that was the Portfolio Department's job.

But there was no community survey - and will not be unless you, the board, intervene. Instead, fewer than 60 North River survey respondents against colocation will speak for the entire Albany Park community about the long-term fate of the Leland building that was supposed to provide Albany Park with a stable, adequate neighborhood middle school. Nope. Once again, our neighborhood school students are on the verge of being relegated, long term to unacceptable conditions, so a city-wide lottery program can expand.

Meanwhile, the Aspira building will continue to be severely underutilized. Once again North River has little or no waitlist and cannot fill the school by doubling each class size, certainly not anytime soon. A decision to deny Haugan students access to the space we need in the Leland building while the building remains severely underutilized is unconscionable.

The only way North River MAY fill their school is if prospective Haugan families are told "Go away. We can't take your kid. Why would you put her here in a class of 33 kids with no library, no art room, no private rooms for counselors, psychologists, the case manager, and other professionals? But there's a nice modern choice school down the street with small class sizes, try there!"

CPS now claims to support neighborhood schools, but does it? We assert that every student has the right to attend an adequately resourced neighborhood school and that expansion of choice schools should never impinge on this right.

We respectfully request that you, as the board, put our co-location request on the agenda, allow it to see the light of day, and allow the public to weigh in. Or alternatively, that you swiftly find another solution that gives us space and does not take away our programs or our students or turn away Haugan families.

We also request that you demand the Portfolio office share the reasons behind its denial - because we have been provided no explanation and cannot fathom any legitimate reason why we are back to square one - a cycle of rinse and repeat, NO solutions, at the expense of our vulnerable students. Please help us. Thank you.

Attached is Haugan's List of Non-Negotiable Demands for Space and Facilities

Haugan Community: Non-Negotiable Demands for Space & Facilities

To ensure equitable education and the continued success of the Haugan community, the following requirements are non-negotiable in any proposal to resolve current space and overcrowding concerns.

1. Holistic Community Integrity

We demand that the Haugan student body remains unified as a single cohort throughout their academic career.

- **No Displacement:** We reject any solution that takes away or turns away Haugan students by assigning specific grades or populations to other schools, or artificially reduces the number of students served by Haugan. While we are open to co-locations or annexes, we do not support assigning our students to other schools, disrupting their academic career.
- **Inclusive Continuity:** This demand explicitly includes our **Students with Disabilities** and **Early Childhood/Pre-K learners**. These populations are integral to our school culture and must not be segregated or displaced.
- **Educational Stability:** All students deserve the stability of remaining in one supportive school community from their first day until graduation/promotion, without the disruption of an involuntary transfer. Even if we occupy separate campuses Haugan must remain one unified school PK - 8 to allow children and families continuity in their academic experience.

2. Dedicated Instructional & Support Environments

We demand fully functional, separate, and dedicated spaces for all core and specialty departments.

- **Specialized Classrooms:** We require permanent, dedicated spaces for **Art** and **Science**. "Classroom on a cart" or sharing general education rooms is not an acceptable solution for these subjects.
- **Library Media Center:** A fully functioning library is essential for literacy and research; it must be a dedicated space, not a shared multi-purpose room.
- **Student Support Services:** We mandate private, dedicated, and confidential spaces for **Counseling and Social Work**. Mental health support cannot be conducted in hallways, closets, or partitioned corners of shared offices.

3. Infrastructure for Dual Language Success/ Strategic & Accurate Enrollment Forecasting

We demand that all space planning explicitly supports our transition toward becoming a Dual Language school. We demand that enrollment projections used for decision-making

reflect the reality of Dual Language attraction, our own experience, and the needs of neighborhood schools.

- **Programmatic Support:** Solutions must provide the physical infrastructure necessary to support the unique scheduling and resource needs of a robust Dual Language curriculum.
- **Growth Factor:** Decision-makers must not rely solely on historical enrollment data. Projections must factor in the **statistically expected increase in enrollment from neighborhood families** that accompanies the designation of Dual Language status.
- **Future-Proofing:** Capacity planning must account for this influx of new neighborhood families to ensure we do not immediately face overcrowding again once the Dual Language program launches.
- **We demand that our enrollment history, projected growth, and needs as a neighborhood school be accounted for Projected Growth Due to new CPS “Right to Stay” Policy** - We demand that CPS factor in our school’s lived experience, over many years, whereby dozens of families each year request to remain at Haugan after moving outside our attendance boundaries. Historically they have not been allowed to, but now they can. This will increase our enrollment.
- **Respect for the unique needs of neighborhood schools** - We demand that CPS accounts for the different models of choice (lottery or test based) schools vs. neighborhood schools which are the backbone of a community. Choice schools can and should limit their enrollment to whatever space allows, and, without any special accommodations, avoid overcrowding. Neighborhood schools must take all comers and cannot limit their enrollment. ***Choice schools should not be expanded at the expense of neighborhood schools.***